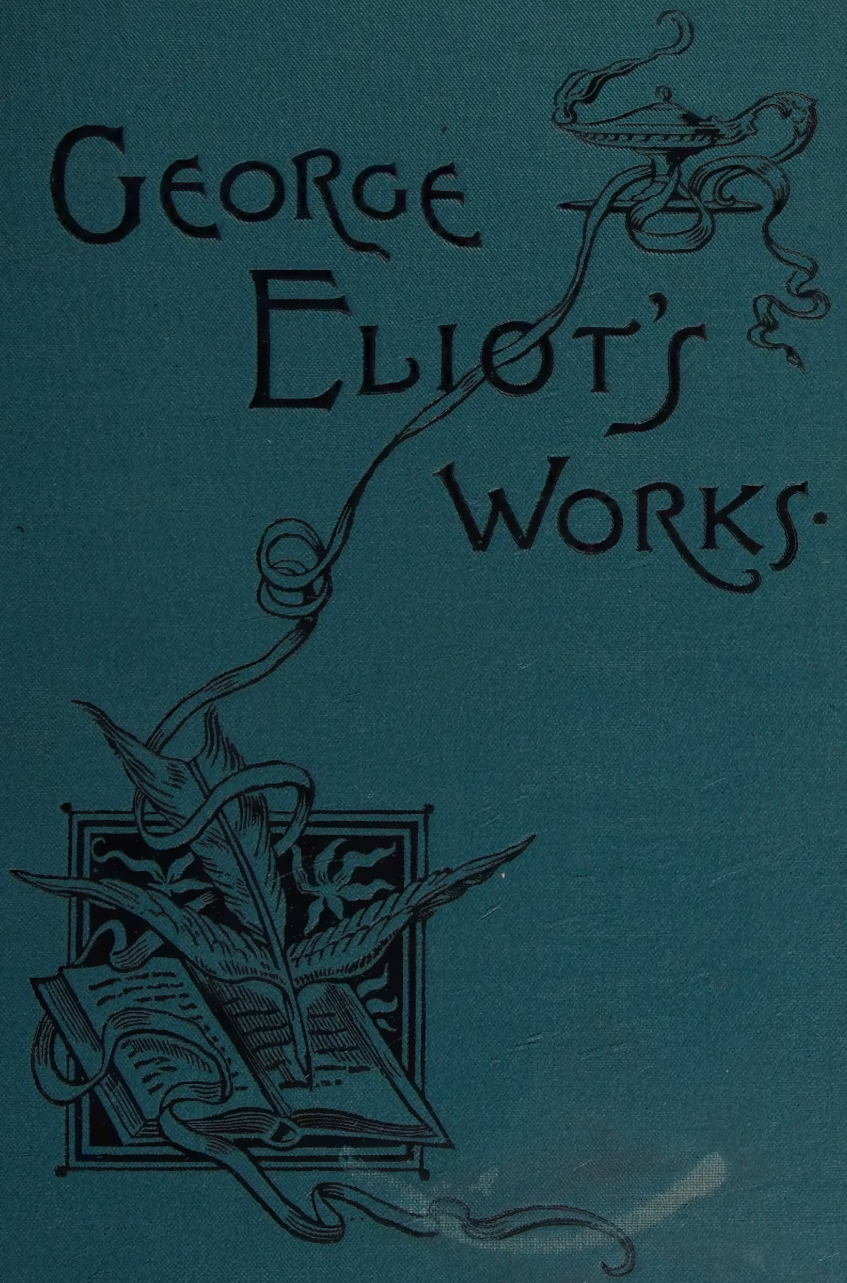
GEORGE ELIOT'S WORKS.



STRADIVARIUS.

THEOPHRASTUS SUCH,

JUBAL, AND OTHER POEMS,

AND

THE SPANISH GYPSY.

BY

GEORGE ELIOT.

NEW EDITION—COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.

CHICAGO:
S. A. MAXWELL & CO.
1887.

"Suspicione si quis errabit sua,
Et rapiet ad se, quod erit commune omnium,
Stulte nudabit animi conscientiam.
Huic excusatum me velim nihilominus:
Neque enim notare singulos mens est mihi,
Verum ipsam vitam et mores hominum ostendere."

—PHÆDRUS.

IMPRESSIONS

OF

THEOPHRASTUS SUCH.

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IMPRESSIONS OF THEOPHRASTUS SUCH.

I.

LOOKING INWARD.

It is my habit to give an account to myself of the characters I meet with: can I give any true account of my own? I am a bachelor, without domestic distractions of any sort, and have all my life been an attentive companion to myself, flattering my nature agreeably on plausible occasions, reviling it rather bitterly when it mortified me, and in general remembering its doings and sufferings with a tenacity which is too apt to raise surprise if not disgust at the careless inaccuracy of my acquaintances, who impute to me opinions I never held, express their desire to convert me to my favorite ideas, forget whether I have ever been to the East, and are capable of being three several times astonished at my never having told them before of my accident in the Alps, causing me the nervous shock which has ever since notably diminished my digestive powers. Surely I ought to know myself better than these indifferent outsiders can know me; nay, better even than my intimate friends, to whom I have never breathed those items of my inward experience which have chiefly shaped my life.

Yet I have often been forced into the reflection that even the acquaintances who are as forgetful of my biography and tenets as they would be if I were a dead philosopher, are probably aware of certain points in me which may not be included in my most active suspicion. We sing an exquisite passage out of tune and innocently repeat it for the greater pleasure of our hearers. Who can be aware of what his foreign accent is in the ears of a native? And how can a man be conscious of that dull perception which causes him to mistake altogether what will make him agreeable to a particular woman, and to persevere eagerly in a behavior which she is privately recording

against him? I have had some confidences from my female friends as to their opinion of other men whom I have observed trying to make themselves amiable, and it has occurred to me that though I can hardly be so blundering as Lippus and the rest of those mistaken candidates for favor whom I have seen ruining their chance by a too elaborate personal canvass, I must still come under the common fatality of mankind and share the liability to be absurd without knowing that I am absurd. It is in the nature of foolish reasoning to seem good to the foolish reasoner. Hence with all possible study of myself, with all possible effort to escape from the pitiable illusion which makes men laugh, shriek or curl the lip at Folly's likeness, in total unconsciousness that it resembles themselves, I am obliged to recognize that while there are secrets in me unguessed by others, these others have certain items of knowledge about the extent of my powers and the figure I make with them, which in turn are secrets unguessed by me. When I was a lad I danced a hornpipe with arduous scrupulosity, and while suffering pangs of pallid shyness was yet proud of my superiority as a dancing pupil, imagining for myself a high place in the estimation of beholders; but I can now picture the amusement they had in the incongruity of my solemn face and ridiculous legs. What sort of hornpipe am I dancing now?

Thus if I laugh at you, O fellow-men! if I trace with curious interest your labyrinthine self-delusions, note the inconsistencies in your zealous adhesions, and smile at your helpless endeavors in a rashly chosen part, it is not that I feel myself aloof from you: the more intimately I seem to discern your weaknesses, the stronger to me is the proof that I share them. How otherwise could I get the discernment?—for even what we are averse to, what we vow not to entertain, must have shaped or shadowed itself within us as a possibility before we can think of exorcising it. No man can know his brother simply as a spectator. Dear blunderers, I am one of you. I wince at the fact, but I am not ignorant of it, that I too am laughable on unsuspected occasions; nay, in the very tempest and whirlwind of my anger, I include myself under my own indignation. If the human race has a bad reputation, I perceive that I cannot escape being compromised. And thus while I carry in myself the key to other men's experience, it is only by observing others that I can so far correct my self-ignorance

as to arrive at the certainty that I am liable to commit myself unawares and to manifest some incompetency which I know no more of than the blind man knows of his image in the glass.

Is it then possible to describe oneself at once faithfully and fully? In all autobiography there is, nay, ought to be, an incompleteness which may have the effect of falsity. We are each of us bound to reticence by the piety we owe to those who have been nearest to us and have had a mingled influence over our lives; by the fellow-feeling which should restrain us from turning our volunteered and picked confessions into an act of accusation against others, who have no chance of vindicating themselves; and most of all by that reverence for the higher efforts of our common nature, which commands us to bury its lowest fatalities, its invincible remnants of the brute, its most agonizing struggles with temptation, in unbroken silence. But the incompleteness which comes of self-ignorance may be compensated by self-betrayal. A man who is affected to tears in dwelling on the generosity of his own sentiments makes me aware of several things not included under those terms. Who has sinned more against those three duteous reticences than Jean Jacques? Yet half our impressions of his character come not from what he means to convey, but from what he unconsciously enables us to discern.

This *naïve* veracity of self-presentation is attainable by the slenderest talent on the most trivial occasions. The least lucid and impressive of orators may be perfectly successful in showing us the weak points of his grammar. Hence I too may be so far like Jean Jacques as to communicate more than I am aware of. I am not indeed writing an autobiography, or pretending to give an unreserved description of myself, but only offering some slight confessions in an apologetic light, to indicate that if in my absence you dealt as freely with my unconscious weaknesses as I have dealt with the unconscious weaknesses of others, I should not feel myself warranted by commonsense in regarding your freedom of observation as an exceptional case of evil-speaking; or as malignant interpretation of a character which really offers no handle to just objection; or even as an unfair use for your amusement of disadvantages which, since they are mine, should be regarded with more than ordinary tenderness. Let me at least try to feel myself in the ranks with my fellow-

men. It is true, that I would rather not hear either your well-founded ridicule or your judicious strictures. Though not averse to finding fault with myself, and conscious of deserving lashes, I like to keep the scourge in my own discriminating hand. I never felt myself sufficiently meritorious to like being hated as a proof of my superiority, or so thirsty for improvement as to desire that all my acquaintances should give me their candid opinion of me. I really do not want to learn from my enemies: I prefer having none to learn from. Instead of being glad when men use me despitefully, I wish they would behave better and find a more amiable occupation for their intervals of business. In brief, after a close intimacy with myself for a longer period than I choose to mention, I find within me a permanent longing for approbation, sympathy, and love.

Yet I am a bachelor, and the person I love best has never loved me, or known that I loved her. Though continually in society, and caring about the joys and sorrows of my neighbors, I feel myself, so far as my personal lot is concerned, uncared for and alone. "Your own fault, my dear fellow!" said Minutius Felix, one day that I had incautiously mentioned this uninteresting fact. And he was right—in senses other than he intended. Why should I expect to be admired, and have my company doated on? I have done no services to my country beyond those of every peaceable orderly citizen; and as to intellectual contribution, my only published work was a failure, so that I am spoken of to inquiring beholders as "the author of a book you have probably not seen." (The work was a humorous romance, unique in its kind, and I am told is much tasted in a Cherokee translation, where the jokes are rendered with all the serious eloquence characteristic of the Red races.) This sort of distinction, as a writer nobody is likely to have read, can hardly counteract an indistinctness in my articulation, which the best-intentioned loudness will not remedy. Then, in some quarters my awkward feet are against me, the length of my upper lip, and an inveterate way I have of walking with my head foremost and my chin projecting. One can become only too well aware of such things by looking in the glass, or in that other mirror held up to nature in the frank opinions of street-boys, or of our Free People traveling by excursion train; and no doubt they account for the half-suppressed smile which I have observed on some fair faces when I have first been presented before them. This direct per-

ceptive judgment is not to be argued against. But I am tempted to remonstrate when the physical points I have mentioned are apparently taken to warrant unfavorable inferences concerning my mental quickness. With all the increasing uncertainty which modern progress has thrown over the relations of mind and body, it seems tolerably clear that wit cannot be seated in the upper lip, and that the balance of the haunches in walking has nothing to do with the subtle discrimination of ideas. Yet strangers evidently do not expect me to make a clever observation, and my good things are as unnoticed as if they were anonymous pictures. I have indeed had the mixed satisfaction of finding that when they were appropriated by some one else they were found remarkable and even brilliant. It is to be borne in mind that I am not rich, have neither stud nor cellar, and no very high connections such as give to a look of imbecility a certain prestige of inheritance through a titled line; just as "the Austrian lip" confers a grandeur of historical associations on a kind of feature which might make us reject an advertising footman. I have now and then done harm to a good cause by speaking for it in public, and have discovered too late that my attitude on the occasion would more suitably have been that of negative beneficence. Is it really to the advantage of an opinion that I should be known to hold it? And as to the force of my arguments, that is a secondary consideration with audiences who have given a new scope to the *ex pede Herculem* principle, and from awkward feet infer awkward fallacies. Once, when zeal lifted me on my legs, I distinctly heard an enlightened artisan remark, "Here's a rum cut!"—and doubtless he reasoned in the same way as the elegant Glycera when she politely puts on an air of listening to me, but elevates her eyebrows and chills her glance in sign of predetermined neutrality: both have their reasons for judging the quality of my speech beforehand.

This sort of reception to a man of affectionate disposition, who has also the innocent vanity of desiring to be agreeable, has naturally a depressing if not embittering tendency; and in early life I began to seek for some consoling point of view, some warrantable method of softening the hard peas I had to walk on, some comfortable fanaticism which might supply the needed self-satisfaction. At one time I dwelt much on the idea of compensation; trying to believe that I was all the wiser for my bruised

vanity, that I had the higher place in the true spiritual scale, and even that a day might come when some visible triumph would place me in the French heaven of having the laughers on my side. But I presently perceived that this was a very odious sort of self-cajolery. Was it in the least true that I was wiser than several of my friends who made an excellent figure, and were perhaps praised a little beyond their merit? Is the ugly unready man in the corner, outside the current of conversation, really likely to have a fairer view of things than the agreeable talker, whose success strikes the unsuccessful as a repulsive example of forwardness and conceit? And as to compensation in future years, would the fact that I myself got it reconcile me to an order of things in which I could see a multitude with as bad a share as mine, who, instead of getting their corresponding compensation, were getting beyond the reach of it in old age? What could be more contemptible than the mood of mind which makes a man measure the justice of divine or human law by the agreeableness of his own shadow and the ample satisfaction of his own desires?

I dropped a form of consolation which seemed to be encouraging me in the persuasion that my discontent was the chief evil in the world, and my benefit the soul of good in that evil. May there not be at least a partial release from the imprisoning verdict that a man's philosophy is the formula of his personality? In certain branches of science we can ascertain our personal equation, the measure of difference between our own judgments and an average standard: may there not be some corresponding correction of our personal partialities in moral theorizing? If a squint or other ocular defect disturbs my vision, I can get instructed in the fact, be made aware that my condition is abnormal, and either through spectacles or diligent imagination I can learn the average appearance of things: is there no remedy or corrective for that inward squint which consists in a dissatisfied egoism or other want of mental balance? In my conscience I saw that the bias of personal discontent was just as misleading and odious as the bias of self-satisfaction. Whether we look through the rose-colored glass or the indigo, we are equally far from the hues which the healthy human eye beholds in heaven above and earth below. I began to dread ways of consoling which were really a flattering of native illusions, a feeding-up into monstrosity of an inward growth already

disproportionate; to get an especial scorn for that scorn of mankind which is a transmuted disappointment of preposterous claims; to watch with peculiar alarm lest what I called my philosophic estimate of the human lot in general should be a mere prose lyric expressing my own pain and consequent bad temper. The standing-ground worth striving after seemed to be some Delectable Mountain, whence I could see things in proportions as little as possible determined by that self-partiality which certainly plays a necessary part in our bodily sustenance, but has a starving effect on the mind.

Thus I finally gave up any attempt to make out that I preferred cutting a bad figure, and that I liked to be despised, because in this way I was getting more virtuous than my successful rivals; and I have long looked with suspicion on all views which are recommended as peculiarly consolatory to wounded vanity or other personal disappointment. The consolations of egoism are simply a change of attitude or a resort to a new kind of diet which soothes and fattens it. Fed in this way it is apt to become a monstrous spiritual pride, or a chuckling satisfaction that the final balance will not be against us but against those who now eclipse us. Examining the world in order to find consolation is very much like looking carefully over the pages of a great book in order to find our own name, if not in the text, at least in a laudatory note; whether we find what we want or not, our preoccupation has hindered us from a true knowledge of the contents. But an attention fixed on the main theme or various matter of the book would deliver us from that slavish subjection to our own self-importance. And I had the mighty volume of the world before me. Nay, I had the struggling action of a myriad lives around me, each single life as dear to itself as mine to me. Was there no escape here from this stupidity of a murmuring self-occupation? Clearly enough, if anything hindered my thought from rising to the force of passionately interested contemplation, or my poor pent up pond of sensitiveness from widening into a beneficent river of sympathy, it was my own dullness; and though I could not make myself the reverse of shallow all at once, I had at least learned where I had better turn my attention.

Something came of this alteration in my point of view, though I admit that the result is of no striking kind. It is unnecessary for me to utter modest denials, since none have assured me that I have a vast intellectual scope, or—

what is more surprising, considering I have done so little—that I might, if I chose, surpass any distinguished man whom they wish to depreciate. I have not attained any lofty peak of magnanimity, nor would I trust beforehand in my capability of meeting a severe demand for moral heroism. But that I have at least succeeded in establishing a habit of mind which keeps watch against my self-partiality and promotes a fair consideration of what touches the feelings or the fortunes of my neighbors, seems to be proved by the ready confidence with which men and women appeal to my interest in their experience. It is gratifying to one who would above all things avoid the insanity of fancying himself a more momentous or touching object than he really is, to find that nobody expects from him the least sign of such mental aberration, and that he is evidently held capable of listening to all kinds of personal outpouring without the least disposition to become communicative in the same way. This confirmation of the hope that my bearing is not that of the self-flattering lunatic is given me in ample measure. My acquaintances tell me unreservedly of their triumphs and their piques; explain their purposes at length, and reassure me with cheerfulness as to their chances of success; insist on their theories and accept me as a dummy with whom they rehearse their side of future discussions; unwind their coiled-up griefs in relation to their husbands, or recite to me examples of feminine incomprehensibleness as typified in their wives; mention frequently the fair applause which their merits have wrung from some persons, and the attacks to which certain oblique motives have stimulated others. At the time when I was less free from superstition about my own power of charming, I occasionally, in the glow of sympathy which embraced me and my confiding friend on the subject of his satisfaction or resentment, was urged to hint at a corresponding experience in my own case; but the signs of a rapidly lowering pulse and spreading nervous depression in my previously vivacious interlocutor, warned me that I was acting on that dangerous misreading, "Do as you are done by." Recalling the true version of the golden rule, I could not wish that others should lower my spirits as I was lowering my friend's. After several times obtaining the same result from a like experiment in which all the circumstances were varied except my own personality, I took it as an established inference that these fitful signs of a lingering belief

in my own importance were generally felt to be abnormal, and were something short of that sanity which I aimed to secure. Clearness on this point is not without its gratifications, as I have said. While my desire to explain myself in private ears has been quelled, the habit of getting interested in the experience of others has been continually gathering strength, and I am really at the point of finding that this world would be worth living in without any lot of one's own. Is it not possible for me to enjoy the scenery of the earth without saying to myself, I have a cabbage-garden in it? But this sounds like the lunacy of fancying one self everybody else and being unable to play one's own part decently—another form of the disloyal attempt to be independent of the common lot, and to live without a sharing of pain.

Perhaps I have made self-betrayals enough already to show that I have not arrived at that non-human independence. My conversational reticences about myself turn into garrulousness on paper—as the sea-lion plunges and swims the more energetically because his limbs are of a sort to make him shambling on land. The act of writing, in spite of past experience, brings with it the vague, delightful illusion of an audience nearer to my idiom than the Cherokees, and more numerous than the visionary One for whom many authors have declared themselves willing to go through the pleasing punishment of publication. My illusion is of a more liberal kind, and I imagine a far-off, hazy, multitudinous assemblage, as in a picture of Paradise, making an approving chorus to the sentences and paragraphs of which I myself particularly enjoy the writing. The haze is a necessary condition. If any physiognomy becomes distinct in the foreground, it is fatal. The countenance is sure to be one bent on discountenancing my innocent intentions: it is pale-eyed, incapable of being amused when I am amused or indignant at what makes me indignant; it stares at my presumption, pities my ignorance, or is manifestly preparing to expose the various instances in which I unconsciously disgrace myself. I shudder at this too corporeal auditor, and turn toward another point of the compass where the haze is unbroken. Why should I not indulge this remaining illusion, since I do not take my approving choral paradise as a warrant for setting the press to work again and making some thousand sheets of superior paper unsaleable? I leave my manuscripts to a judgment outside my imagination, but I will

not ask to hear it, or request my friend to pronounce, before I have been buried decently, what he really thinks of my parts, and to state candidly whether my papers would be most usefully applied in lighting the cheerful domestic fire. It is too probable that he will be exasperated at the trouble I have given him of reading them; but the consequent clearness and vivacity with which he could demonstrate to me that the fault of my manuscripts, as of my one published work, is simply flatness and not that surpassing subtilty which is the preferable ground of popular neglect—this verdict, however instructively expressed, is a portion of earthly discipline of which I will not beseech my friend to be the instrument. Other persons, I am aware, have not the same cowardly shrinking from a candid opinion of their performances, and are even importunately eager for it; but I have convinced myself in numerous cases that such exposers of their own back to the smiter were of too hopeful a disposition to believe in the scourge, and really trusted in a pleasant anointing, an outpouring of balm without any previous wounds. I am of a less trusting disposition, and will only ask my friend to use his judgment in insuring me against posthumous mistake.

Thus I make myself a charter to write and keep the pleasing, inspiring illusion of being listened to, though I may sometimes write about myself. What I have already said on this too familiar theme has been meant only as a preface, to show that in noting the weaknesses of my acquaintances I am conscious of my fellowship with them. That a gratified sense of superiority is at the root of barbarous laughter may be at least half the truth. But there is a loving laughter in which the only recognized superiority is that of the ideal self, the God within, holding the mirror and the scourge for our own pettiness as well as our neighbors'.

II.

LOOKING BACKWARD.

Most of us who have had decent parents would shrink from wishing that our father and mother had been somebody else whom we never knew; yet it is held no impiety, rather, a graceful mark of instruction, for a man to wail that he was not the son of another age and another nation, of which also he knows nothing except through the easy process of an imperfect imagination and a flattering fancy.

But the period thus looked back on with a purely admiring regret, as perfect enough to suit a superior mind, is always a long way off; the desirable contemporaries are hardly nearer than Leonardo da Vinci, most likely they are the fellow-citizens of Pericles, or, best of all, of the Æolic lyrists whose sparse remains suggest a comfortable contrast with our redundance. No impassioned personage wishes he had been born in the age of Pitt, that his ardent youth might have eaten the dearest bread, dressed itself with the longest coat-tails and the shortest waist, or heard the loudest grumbling at the heaviest war-taxes; and it would be really something original in polished verse if one of our young writers declared he would gladly be turned eighty-five that he might have known the joy and pride of being an Englishman when there were fewer reforms and plenty of highwaymen, fewer discoveries and more faces pitted with the small-pox, when laws were made to keep up the price of corn, and the troublesome Irish were more miserable. Three quarters of a century ago is not a distance that lends much enchantment to the view. We are familiar with the average men of that period, and are still consciously encumbered with its bad contrivances and mistaken acts. The lords and gentlemen painted by young Lawrence talked and wrote their nonsense in a tongue we thoroughly understand; hence their times are not much flattered, not much glorified by the yearnings of that modern sect of Flaggellants who make a ritual of lashing — not themselves but — all their neighbors. To me, however, that paternal time, the time of my father's youth, never seemed prosaic, for it

came to my imagination first through his memories, which made a wondrous perspective to my little daily world of discovery. And, for my part, I can call no age absolutely unpoetic: how should it be so, since there are always children to whom the acorns and the swallow's eggs are a wonder, always those human passions and fatalities through which Garrick as Hamlet in bob-wig and knee-breeches moved his audience more than some have since done in velvet tunic and plume? But every age since the golden may be made more or less prosaic by minds that attend only to its vulgar and sordid elements, of which there was always an abundance even in Greece and Italy, the favorite realms of the retrospective optimists. To be quite fair toward the ages, a little ugliness as well as beauty must be allowed to each of them, a little implicit poetry even to those which echoed loudest with servile, pompous, and trivial prose.

Such impartiality is not in vogue at present. If we acknowledge our obligation to the ancients, it is hardly to be done without some flouting of our contemporaries, who with all their faults must be allowed the merit of keeping the world habitable for the refined eulogists of the blameless past. One wonders whether the remarkable originators who first had the notion of digging wells, or of churning for butter, and who were certainly very useful to their own time as well as ours, were left quite free from invidious comparison with predecessors who let the water and the milk alone, or whether some rhetorical nomad, as he stretched himself on the grass with a good appetite for contemporary butter, became loud on the virtue of ancestors who were uncorrupted by the produce of the cow; nay, whether in a high flight of imaginative self-sacrifice (after swallowing the butter) he even wished himself earlier born and already eaten for the sustenance of a generation more *naive* than his own.

I have often had the fool's hectic of wishing about the unalterable, but with me that useless exercise has turned chiefly on the conception of a different self, and not, as it usually does in literature, on the advantage of having been born in a different age, and more especially in one where life is imagined to have been altogether majestic and graceful. With my present abilities, external proportions, and generally small provision for ecstatic enjoyment, where is the ground for confidence that I should have had a preferable career in such an epoch of society? An age in which

every department has its awkward-squad seems in my mind's eye to suit me better. I might have wandered by the Strymon under Philip and Alexander without throwing any new light on method or organizing the sum of human knowledge; on the other hand, I might have objected to Aristotle as too much of a systematizer, and have preferred the freedom of a little self-contradiction as offering more chances of truth. I gather, too, from the undeniable testimony of his disciple Theophrastus that there were bores, ill-bred persons, and detractors even in Athens, of species remarkably corresponding to the English, and not yet made endurable by being classic; and, altogether, with my present fastidious nostril, I feel that I am the better off for possessing Athenian life solely as an inodorous fragment of antiquity. As to Sappho's Mitylene, while I am convinced that the Lesbian capital held some plain men of middle stature and slow conversational powers, the addition of myself to their number, though clad in the majestic folds of the himation and without cravat, would hardly have made a sensation among the accomplished fair ones who were so precise in adjusting their own drapery about their delicate ankles. Whereas by being another sort of person in the present age I might have given it some needful theoretic clue. Or I might have poured forth poetic strains which would have anticipated theory and seemed a voice from

> "the prophetic soul
> Of the wide world dreaming of things to come."

Or I might have been one of those benignant, lovely souls who, without astonishing the public and posterity, make a happy difference in the lives close around them, and in this way lift the average of earthly joy. In some form or other I might have been so filled from the store of universal existence that I should have been freed from that empty wishing which is like a child's cry to be inside a golden cloud. its imagination being too ignorant to figure the lining of dimness and damp.

On the whole, though there is some rash boasting about enlightenment, and an occasional insistence on an originality which is that of the present year's corn crop, we seem too much disposed to indulge, and to call by complimentary names, a greater charity for other portions of the human race than for our contemporaries. All reverence and gratitude for the worthy Dead on whose labors we

have entered, all care for the future generations whose lot we are preparing; but some affection and fairness for those who are doing the actual work of the world, some attempt to regard them with the same freedom from ill-temper, whether on private or public grounds, as we may hope will be felt by those who will call us ancient! Otherwise, the looking before and after, which is our grand human privilege, is in danger of turning to a sort of other-worldliness, breeding a more illogical indifference or bitterness than was ever bred by the ascetic's contemplation of heaven. Except on the ground of a primitive golden age and continuous degeneracy, I see no rational footing for scorning the whole present population of the globe, unless I scorn every previous generation from whom they have inherited their diseases of mind and body, and by consequence scorn my own scorn, which is equally an inheritance of mixed ideas and feelings concocted for me in the boiling caldron of this universally contemptible life, and so on—scorning to infinity. This may represent some actual states of mind, for it is a narrow prejudice of mathematicians to suppose that ways of thinking are to be driven out of the field by being reduced to an absurdity. The Absurd is taken as an excellent juicy thistle by many constitutions.

Reflections of this sort have gradually determined me not to grumble at the age in which I happen to have been born—a natural tendency certainly older than Hesiod. Many ancient beautiful things are lost, many ugly modern things have arisen; but invert the proposition and it is equally true. I at least am a modern with some interest in advocating tolerance, and notwithstanding an inborn beguilement which carries my affection and regret continually into an imagined past, I am aware that I must lose all sense of moral proportion unless I keep alive a stronger attachment to what is near, and a power of admiring what I best know and understand. Hence this question of wishing to be rid of one's contemporaries associates itself with my filial feeling, and calls up the thought that I might as justifiably wish that I had had other parents than those whose loving tones are my earliest memory, and whose last parting first taught me the meaning of death. I feel bound to quell such a wish as blasphemy.

Besides, there are other reasons why I am contented that my father was a country parson, born much about the same time as Scott and Wordsworth; notwithstanding certain qualms I have felt at the fact that the property on

which I am living was saved out of tithe before the period of commutation, and without the provisional transfiguration into a modus. It has sometimes occurred to me when I have been taking a slice of excellent ham that, from a too tenable point of view, I was breakfasting on a small squealing black pig which, more than half a century ago, was the unwilling representative of spiritual advantages not otherwise acknowledged by the grudging farmer or dairyman who parted with him. One enters on a fearful labyrinth in tracing compound interest backward, and such complications of thought have reduced the flavor of the ham; but since I have nevertheless eaten it, the chief effect has been to moderate the severity of my radicalism (which was not part of my paternal inheritance) and to raise the assuaging reflection, that if the pig and the parishioner had been intelligent enough to anticipate my historical point of view, they would have seen themselves and the rector in a light that would have made tithe voluntary. Notwithstanding such drawbacks I am rather fond of the mental furniture I got by having a father who was well acquainted with all ranks of his neighbors, and am thankful that he was not one of those aristocratic clergymen who could not have sat down to a meal with any family in the parish except my lord's—still more that he was not an earl or a marquis. A chief misfortune of high birth is that it usually shuts a man out from the large sympathetic knowledge of human experience which comes from contact with various classes on their own level, and in my father's time that entail of social ignorance had not been disturbed as we see it now. To look always from overhead at the crowd of one's fellow-men must be in many ways incapacitating, even with the best will and intelligence. The serious blunders it must lead to in the effort to manage them for their good, one may see clearly by the mistaken ways people take of flattering and enticing others whose associations are unlike their own. Hence I have always thought that the most fortunate Britons are those whose experience has given them a practical share in many aspects of the national lot, who have lived long among the mixed commonality, roughing it with them under difficulties; knowing how their food tastes to them, and getting acquainted with their notions and motives not by inference from traditional types in literature or from philosophical theories, but from daily fellowship and observation. Of course such experience is apt to get

antiquated, and my father might find himself much at a loss amongst a mixed rural population of the present day; but he knew very well what could be wisely expected from the miners, the weavers, the field-laborers, and the farmers of his own time—yes, and from the aristocracy, for he had been brought up in close contact with them and had been companion to a young nobleman who was deaf and dumb. "A clergyman, lad," he used to say to me, "should feel in himself a bit of every class"; and this theory had a felicitous agreement with his inclination and practice, which certainly answered in making him beloved by his parishioners. They grumbled at their obligations toward him; but what then? It was natural to grumble at any demand for payment, tithe included, but also natural for a rector to desire his tithe and look well after the levying. A Christian pastor who did not mind about his money was not an ideal prevalent among the rural minds of fat central England, and might have seemed to introduce a dangerous laxity of supposition about Christian laymen who happened to be creditors. My father was none the less beloved because he was understood to be of a saving disposition, and how could he save without getting his tithe? The sight of him was not unwelcome at any door; and he was remarkable among the clergy of his district for having no lasting feud with rich or poor in his parish. I profited by his popularity, and for months after my mother's death, when I was a little fellow of nine, I was taken care of first at one homestead and then at another, a variety which I enjoyed much more than my stay at the Hall, where there was a tutor. Afterward for several years I was my father's constant companion in his outdoor business, riding by his side on my little pony and listening to the lengthy dialogues he held with Darby or Joan, the one on the road or in the fields, the other outside or inside her door. In my earliest remembrance of him his hair was already gray, for I was his youngest as well as his only surviving child; and it seemed to me that advanced age was appropriate to a father, as indeed in all respects I consider him a parent so much to my honor, that the mention of my relationship to him was likely to secure me regard among those to whom I was otherwise a stranger—my father's stories from his life including so many names of distant persons that my imagination placed no limit to his acquaintanceship. He was a pithy talker, and his sermons bore marks of his own composition. It is true, they

must have been already old when I began to listen to them, and they were no more than a year's supply, so that they recurred as regularly as the Collects. But though this system has been much ridiculed, I am prepared to defend it as equally sound with that of a liturgy; and even if my researches had shown me that some of my father's yearly sermons had been copied out from the works of elder divines, this would only have been another proof of his good judgment. One may prefer fresh eggs though laid by a fowl of the meanest understanding, but why fresh sermons?

Nor can I be sorry, though myself given to meditative if not active innovation, that my father was a Tory who had not exactly a dislike to innovators and dissenters, but a slight opinion of them as persons of ill-founded self-confidence; whence my young ears gathered many details concerning those who might perhaps have called themselves the more advanced thinkers in our nearest market-town, tending to convince me that their characters were quite as mixed as those of the thinkers behind them. This circumstance of my rearing has at least delivered me from certain mistakes of classification which I observe in many of my superiors, who have apparently no affectionate memories of a goodness mingled with what they now regard as outworn prejudices. Indeed, my philosophical notions, such as they are, continually carry me back to the time when the fitful gleams of a spring day used to show me my own shadow as that of a small boy on a small pony, riding by the side of a larger cob-mounted shadow over the breezy uplands which we used to dignify with the name of hills, or along by-roads with broad grassy borders and hedge-rows reckless of utility, on our way to outlying hamlets, whose groups of inhabitants were as distinctive to my imagination as if they had belonged to different regions of the globe. From these we sometimes rode onward to the adjoining parish, where also my father officiated, for he was a pluralist, but—I hasten to add—on the smallest scale; for his one extra living was a poor vicarage, with hardly fifty parishioners, and its church would have made a very shabby barn, the gray worm-eaten wood of its pews and pulpit, with their doors only half hanging on the hinges, being exactly the color of a lean mouse which I once observed as an interesting member of the scant congregation, and conjectured to be the identical church mouse I had heard referred to as an example of extreme poverty;

for I was a precocious boy, and often reasoned after the fashion of my elders, arguing that "Jack and Jill" were real personages in our parish, and that if I could identify "Jack" I should find on him the marks of a broken crown.

Sometimes when I am in a crowded London drawing-room (for I am a town-bird now, acquainted with smoky eaves, and tasting Nature in the parks) quick flights of memory take me back among my father's parishioners while I am still conscious of elbowing men who wear the same evening uniform as myself; and I presently begin to wonder what varieties of history lie hidden under this monotony of aspect. Some of them, perhaps, belong to families with many quarterings; but how many "quarterings" of diverse contact with their fellow-countrymen enter into their qualifications to be parliamentary leaders, professors of social science, or journalistic guides of the popular mind? Not that I feel myself a person made competent by experience; on the contrary, I argue that since an observation of different ranks has still left me practically a poor creature, what must be the condition of those who object even to read about the life of other British classes than their own? But of my elbowing neighbors with their crush hats, I usually imagine that the most distinguished among them have probably had a far more instructive journey into manhood than mine. Here, perhaps, is a thought-worn physiognomy, seeming at the present moment to be classed as a mere species of white cravat and swallow-tail, which may once, like Faraday's, have shown itself in curiously dubious embryonic form leaning against a cottage lintel in small corduroys, and hungrily eating a bit of brown bread and bacon; *there* is a pair of eyes, now too much wearied by the gas-light of public assemblies, that once perhaps learned to read their native England through the same alphabet as mine — not within the boundaries of an ancestral park, never even being driven through the county town five miles off, but—among the midland villages and markets, along by the tree-studded hedgerows, and where the heavy barges seem in the distance to float mysteriously among the rushes and the feathered grass. Our vision, both real and ideal, has since then been filled with far other scenes: among eternal snows and stupendous sun-scorched monuments of departed empires; within the scent of the long orange-groves; and where the temple of Neptune looks out over the siren-haunted sea. But my eyes at least have kept their early affectionate joy in our

native landscape, which is one deep root of our national life and language.

And I often smile at my consciousness that certain conservative prepossessions have mingled themselves for me with the influences of our midland scenery, from the tops of the elms down to the buttercups and the little wayside vetches. Naturally enough. That part of my father's prime to which he oftenest referred had fallen on the days when the great wave of political enthusiasm and belief in a speedy regeneration of all things had ebbed, and the supposed millennial initiative of France was turning into a Napoleonic empire, the sway of an Attila with a mouth speaking proud things in a jargon half revolutionary, half Roman. Men were beginning to shrink timidly from the memory of their own words and from the recognition of the fellowships they had formed ten years before; and even reforming Englishmen for the most part were willing to wait for the perfection of society, if only they could keep their throats perfect and help to drive away the chief enemy of mankind from our coasts. To my father's mind the noisy teachers of revolutionary doctrine were, to speak mildly, a variable mixture of the fool and the scoundrel; the welfare of the nation lay in a strong government which could maintain order; and I was accustomed to hear him utter the word "Government" in a tone that charged it with awe, and made it part of my effective religion, in contrast with the word "rebel," which seemed to carry the stamp of evil in its syllables, and, lit by the fact that Satan was the first rebel, made an argument dispensing with more detailed inquiry. I gathered that our national troubles in the first two decades of this century were not at all due to the mistakes of our administrators; and that England, with its fine Church and Constitution, would have been exceedingly well off if every British subject had been thankful for what was provided, and had minded his own business—if, for example, numerous Catholics of that period had been aware how very modest they ought to be considering they were Irish. The times, I heard, had often been bad; but I was constantly hearing of "bad times" as a name for actual evenings and mornings when the godfathers who gave them that name appeared to me remarkably comfortable. Altogether, my father's England seemed to me lovable, laudable, full of good men, and having good rulers, from Mr. Pitt on to the Duke of Wellington, until he was for emancipating the Catholics; and

it was so far from prosaic to me that I looked into it for a more exciting romance than such as I could find in my own adventures, which consisted mainly in fancied crises calling for the resolute wielding of domestic swords and firearms against unapparent robbers, rioters, and invaders who, it seemed, in my father's prime had more chance of being real. The morris-dancers had not then dwindled to a ragged and almost vanished rout (owing the traditional name probably to the historic fancy of our superannuated groom); also the good old king was alive and well, which made all the more difference because I had no notion what he was and did—only understanding in general that if he had been still on the throne he would have hindered everything that wise persons thought undesirable.

Certainly that elder England with its frankly saleable boroughs, so cheap compared with the seats obtained under the reformed method, and its boroughs kindly presented by noblemen desirous to encourage gratitude; its prisons with a miscellaneous company of felons and maniacs and without any supply of water; its bloated, idle charities; its non-resident, jovial clergy; its militia-balloting; and above all, its blank ignorance of what we, its posterity, should be thinking of it,—has great differences from the England of to-day. Yet we discern a strong family likeness. Is there any country which shows at once as much stability and as much susceptibility to change as ours? Our national life is like that scenery which I early learned to love, not subject to great convulsions, but easily showing more or less delicate (sometimes melancholy) effects from minor changes. Hence our midland plains have never lost their familiar expression and conservative spirit for me; yet at every other mile, since I first looked on them, some sign of world-wide change, some new direction of human labor has wrought itself into what one may call the speech of the landscape—in contrast with those grander and vaster regions of the earth which keep an indifferent aspect in the presence of men's toil and devices. What does it signify that a lilliputian train passes over a viaduct amidst the abysses of the Apennines, or that a caravan laden with a nation's offerings creeps across the unresting sameness of the desert, or that a petty cloud of steam sweeps for an instant over the face of an Egyptian colossus immovably submitting to its slow burial beneath the sand? But our woodlands and pastures, our hedge-parted corn-fields and meadows, our bits of high

common where we used to plant the windmills, our quiet little rivers here and there fit to turn a mill-wheel, our villages along the old coach-roads, are all easily alterable lineaments that seem to make the face of our Motherland sympathetic with the laborious lives of her children. She does not take their plows and wagons contemptuously, but rather makes every hovel and every sheepfold, every railed bridge or fallen tree-trunk an agreeably noticeable incident; not a mere speck in the midst of unmeasured vastness, but a piece of our social history in pictorial writing.

Our rural tracts—where no Babel-chimney scales the heavens—are without mighty objects to fill the soul with the sense of an outer world unconquerably aloof from our efforts. The wastes are playgrounds (and let us try to keep them such for the children's children who will inherit no other sort of demesne); the grasses and reeds nod to each other over the river, but we have cut a canal close by; the very heights laugh with corn in August or lift the plough-team against the sky in September. Then comes a crowd of burly navvies with pickaxes and barrows, and while hardly a wrinkle is made in the fading mother's face or a new curve of health in the blooming girl's, the hills are cut through or the breaches between them spanned, we choose our level and the white steam-pennon flies along it.

But because our land shows this readiness to be changed, all signs of permanence upon it raise a tender attachment instead of awe: some of us, at least, love the scanty relics of our forests, and are thankful if a bush is left of the old hedgerow. A crumbling bit of wall where the delicate ivy-leaved toad-flax hangs its light branches, or a bit of gray thatch with patches of dark moss on its shoulder and a troop of grass-stems on its ridge, is a thing to visit. And then the tiled roof of cottage and homestead, of the long cow-shed where generations of the milky mothers have stood patiently, of the broad-shouldered barns where the old-fashioned flail once made resonant music, while the watch-dog barked at the timidly venturesome fowls making pecking raids on the outflying grain—the roofs that have looked out from among the elms and walnut-trees, or beside the yearly group of hay and corn stacks, or below the square stone steeple, gathering their gray or ochre-tinted lichens and their olive-green mosses under all ministries,—let us praise the sober harmonies they give to our landscape, helping to unite us pleasantly with the elder genera-

tions who tilled the soil for us before we were born, and paid heavier and heavier taxes, with much grumbling, but without that deepest root of corruption—the self-indulgent despair which cuts down and consumes and never plants.

But I check myself. Perhaps this England of my affections is half visionary—a dream in which things are connected according to my well-fed, lazy mood, and not at all by the multitudinous links of graver, sadder fact, such as belong everywhere to the story of human labor. Well, well, the illusions that began for us when we were less acquainted with evil have not lost their value when we discern them to be illusions. They feed the ideal Better, and in loving them still, we strengthen the precious habit of loving something not visibly, tangibly existent, but a spiritual product of our visible tangible selves.

I cherish my childish loves—the memory of that warm little nest where my affections were fledged. Since then I have learned to care for foreign countries, for literatures foreign and ancient, for the life of Continental towns dozing round old cathedrals, for the life of London, half sleepless with eager thought and strife, with indigestion or with hunger; and now my consciousness is chiefly of the busy, anxious metropolitan sort. My system responds sensitively to the London weather-signs, political, social, literary; and my bachelor's hearth is imbedded where by much craning of head and neck I can catch sight of a sycamore in the Square garden: I belong to the "Nation of London." Why? There have been many voluntary exiles in the world, and probably in the very first exodus of the patriarchal Aryans—for I am determined not to fetch my examples from races whose talk is of uncles and no fathers—some of those who sallied forth went for the sake of a loved companionship, when they would willingly have kept sight of the familiar plains, and of the hills to which they had first lifted up their eyes.

III.

HOW WE ENCOURAGE RESEARCH.

THE serene and beneficent goddess Truth, like other deities whose disposition has been too hastily inferred from that of the men who have invoked them, can hardly be well pleased with much of the worship paid to her even in this milder age, when the stake and the rack have ceased to form part of her ritual. Some cruelties still pass for service done in her honor: no thumb-screw is used, no iron boot, no scorching of flesh; but plenty of controversial bruising, laceration, and even life-long maiming. Less than formerly; but so long as this sort of truth-worship has the sanction of a public that can often understand nothing in a controversy except personal sarcasm or slanderous ridicule, it is likely to continue. The sufferings of its victims are often as little regarded as those of the sacrificial pig offered in old time, with what we now regard as a sad miscalculation of effects.

One such victim is my old acquaintance Merman. Twenty years ago Merman was a young man of promise, a conveyancer, with a practice which had certainly budded, but, unlike Aaron's rod, seemed not destined to proceed further in that marvelous activity. Meanwhile, he occupied himself in miscellaneous periodical writing and in a multifarious study of moral and physical science. What chiefly attracted him in all subjects were the vexed questions which have the advantage of not admitting the decisive proof or disproof that renders many ingenious arguments superannuated. Not that Merman had a wrangling disposition: he put all his doubts, queries and paradoxes deferentially, contended without unpleasant heat and only with a sonorous eagerness against the personality of Homer, expressed himself civilly though firmly on the origin of language, and had tact enough to drop at the right moment such subjects as the ultimate reduction of all the so-called elementary substances, his own total skepticism concerning Manetho's chronology, or even the relation between the magnetic condition of the earth and the outbreak of revolutionary tendencies. Such flexibility

was naturally much helped by his amiable feeling toward women, whose nervous system, he was convinced, would not bear the continuous strain of difficult topics; and also by his willingness to contribute a song whenever the same desultory charmer proposed music. Indeed, his tastes were domestic enough to beguile him into marriage when his resources were still very moderate and partly uncertain. His friends wished that so ingenious and agreeable a fellow might have more prosperity than they ventured to hope for him, their chief regret on his account being that he did not concentrate his talent and leave off forming opinions on at least half a dozen of the subjects over which he scattered his attention, especially now that he had married a "nice little woman" (the generic name for acquaintances' wives when they are not markedly disagreeable). He could not, they observed, want all his various knowledge and Laputan ideas for his periodical writing which brought him most of his bread, and he would do well to use his talents in getting a speciality that would fit him for a post. Perhaps these well-disposed persons were a little rash in presuming that fitness for a post would be the surest ground for getting it; and, on the whole, in now looking back on their wishes for Merman, their chief satisfaction must be that those wishes did not contribute to the actual result.

For in an evil hour Merman did concentrate himself. He had for many years taken into his interest the comparative history of the ancient civilizations, but it had not preoccupied him so as to narrow his generous attention to everything else. One sleepless night, however (his wife has more than once narrated to me the details of an event memorable to her as the beginning of sorrows), after spending some hours over the epoch-making work of Grampus, a new idea seized him with regard to the possible connection of certain symbolic monuments common to widely scattered races. Merman started up in bed. The night was cold, and the sudden withdrawal of warmth made his wife first dream of a snowball, and then cry—

"What is the matter, Proteus?"

"A great matter, Julia. That fellow Grampus, whose book is cried up as a revelation, is all wrong about the Magicodumbras and the Zuzumotzis, and I have got hold of the right clue."

"Good gracious! does it matter so much? Don't drag the clothes, dear."

"It signifies this, Julia, that if I am right I shall set the world right; I shall regenerate history; I shall win the mind of Europe to a new view of social origins; I shall bruise the head of many superstitions."

"Oh, no, dear; don't go too far into things. Lie down again. You have been dreaming. What are the Madico-jumbras and Zuzitotzums? I never heard you talk of them before. What use can it be troubling yourself about such things?"

"That is the way, Julia—that is the way wives alienate their husbands, and make any hearth pleasanter to him than his own."

"What *do* you mean, Proteus?"

"Why, if a woman will not try to understand her husband's ideas, or at least to believe that they are of more value than she can understand—if she is to join anybody who happens to be against him, and suppose he is a fool because others contradict him—there is an end of our happiness. That is all I have to say."

"Oh, no, Proteus, dear. I do believe what you say is right. That is my only guide. I am sure I never have any opinions in any other way: I mean about subjects. Of course there are many little things that would tease you, that you like me to judge of for myself. I know I said once that I did not want you to sing 'Oh, ruddier than the cherry,' because it was not in your voice. But I cannot remember ever differing from you about *subjects*. I never in my life thought any one cleverer than you."

Julia Merman was really a "nice little woman," not one of the stately Dians sometimes spoken of in those terms. Her black *silhouette* had a very infantine aspect, but she had discernment and wisdom enough to act on the strong hint of that memorable conversation, never again giving her husband the slightest ground for suspecting that she thought treasonably of his ideas in relation to the Magico-dumbras and Zuzumotzis, or in the least relaxed her faith in his infallibility because Europe was not also convinced of it. It was well for her that she did not increase her troubles in this way; but to do her justice, what she was chiefly anxious about was to avoid increasing her husband's troubles.

Not that these were great in the beginning. In the first development and writing out of his scheme, Merman had a more intense kind of intellectual pleasure than he had ever known before. His face became more radiant, his

general view of human prospects more cheerful. Foreseeing that truth as presented by himself would win the recognition of his contemporaries, he excused with much liberality their rather rough treatment of other theorists whose basis was less perfect. His own periodical criticisms had never before been so amiable; he was sorry for that unlucky majority whom the spirit of the age, or some other prompting more definite and local, compelled to write without any particular ideas. The possession of an original theory which has not yet been assailed must certainly sweeten the temper of a man who is not beforehand ill-natured. And Merman was the reverse of ill-natured.

But the hour of publication came; and to half-a-dozen persons, described as the learned world of two hemispheres, it became known that Grampus was attacked. This might have been a small matter; for who or what on earth that is good for anything is not assailed by ignorance, stupidity, or malice — and sometimes even by just objection? But on examination it appeared that the attack might possibly be held damaging, unless the ignorance of the author were well exposed and his pretended facts shown to be chimeras of that remarkably hideous kind begotten by imperfect learning on the more feminine element of original incapacity. Grampus himself did not immediately cut open the volume which Merman had been careful to send him, not without a very lively and shifting conception of the possible effects which the explosive gift might produce on the too eminent scholar—effects that must certainly have set in on the third day from the dispatch of the parcel. But in point of fact, Grampus knew nothing of the book until his friend Lord Narwhal sent him an American newspaper containing a spirited article by the well known Professor Sperm N. Whale which was rather equivocal in its bearing, the passages quoted from Merman being of rather a telling sort, and the paragraphs which seemed to blow defiance being unaccountably feeble, coming from so distinguished a Cetacean. Then, by another post, arrived letters from Butzkopf and Dugong, both men whose signatures were familiar to the Teutonic world in the *Selten-erscheinende Monat-schrift* or Hayrick for the insertion of Split Hairs, asking their Master whether he meant to take up the combat, because, in the contrary case, both were ready.

Thus America and Germany were roused, though England was still drowsy, and it seemed time now for Grampus

to find Merman's book under the heap and cut it open. For his own part, he was perfectly at ease about his system; but this is a world in which the truth requires defense, and specious falsehood must be met with exposure. Grampus having once looked through the book, no longer wanted any urging to write the most crushing of replies. This, and nothing less than this, was due from him to the cause of sound inquiry; and the punishment would cost him little pains. In three weeks from that time the palpitating Merman saw his book announced in the programme of the leading Review. No need for Grampus to put his signature. Who else had his vast yet microscopic knowledge, who else his power of epithet? This article in which Merman was pilloried and as good as mutilated—for he was shown to have neither ear nor nose for the subtleties of philological and archæological study—was much read and more talked of, not because of any interest in the system of Grampus, or any precise conception of the danger attending lax views of the Magicodumbras and Zuzumotzis, but because the sharp epigrams with which the victim was lacerated, and the soaring fountains of acrid mud which were shot upward and poured over the fresh wounds, were found amusing in recital. A favorite passage was one in which a certain kind of sciolist was described as a creature of the Walrus kind, having a phantasmal resemblance to higher animals when seen by ignorant minds in the twilight, dabbling or hobbling in first one element and then the other, without parts or organs suited to either, in fact, one of Nature's impostors who could not be said to have any artful pretenses, since a congenital incompetence to all precision of aim and movement made their every action a pretense—just as a being born in doeskin gloves would necessarily pass a judgment on surfaces, but we all know what his judgment would be worth. In drawing-room circles, and for the immediate hour, this ingenious comparison was as damaging as the showing up of Merman's mistakes and the mere smattering of linguistic and historical knowledge which he had presumed to be a sufficient basis for theorizing; but the more learned cited his blunders aside to each other and laughed the laugh of the initiated. In fact, Merman's was a remarkable case of sudden notoriety. In London drums and clubs he was spoken of abundantly as one who had written ridiculously about the Magicodumbras and Zuzumotzis: the leaders of conversation, whether Chris-

tians, Jews, infidels, or of any other confession except the confession of ignorance, pronouncing him shallow and indiscreet if not presumptuous and absurd. He was heard of at Warsaw, and even Paris took knowledge of him. M. Cachalot had not read either Grampus or Merman, but he heard of their dispute in time to insert a paragraph upon it in his brilliant work, *L'orient au point de vue actuel*, in which he was dispassionate enough to speak of Grampus as possessing a *coup d'œil presque français* in matters of historical interpretation, and of Merman as nevertheless an objector *qui mérite d'être connu*. M. Porpesse, also, availing himself of M. Cachalot's knowledge, reproduced it in an article with certain additions, which it is only fair to distinguish as his own, implying that the vigorous English of Grampus was not always as correct as a Frenchman could desire, while Merman's objections were more sophistical than solid. Presently, indeed, there appeared an able *extrait* of Grampus's article in the valuable *Rapporteur scientifique et historique*, and Merman's mistakes were thus brought under the notice of certain Frenchmen who are among the masters of those who know on oriental subjects. In a word, Merman, though not extensively read, was extensively read about.

Meanwhile, how did he like it? Perhaps nobody, except his wife, for a moment reflected on that. An amused society considered that he was severely punished, but did not take the trouble to imagine his sensations; indeed this would have been a difficulty for persons less sensitive and excitable than Merman himself. Perhaps that popular comparison of the Walrus had truth enough to bite and blister on thorough application, even if exultant ignorance had not applauded it. But it is well known that the walrus, though not in the least a malignant animal, if allowed to display its remarkably plain person and blundering performances at ease in any element it chooses, becomes desperately savage and musters alarming auxiliaries when attacked or hurt. In this characteristic, at least, Merman resembled the walrus. And now he concentrated himself with a vengeance. That his counter-theory was fundamentally the right one he had a genuine conviction, whatever collateral mistakes he might have committed; and his bread would not cease to be bitter to him until he had convinced his contemporaries that Grampus had used his minute learning as a dust-cloud to hide sophistical evasions—that, in fact, minute learning was an obstacle to

clear-sighted judgment, more especially with regard to the Magicodumbras and Zuzumotzis, and that the best preparation in this matter was a wide survey of history, and a diversified observation of men. Still, Merman was resolved to muster all the learning within his reach, and he wandered day and night through many wildernesses of German print, he tried compendious methods of learning oriental tongues, and, so to speak, getting at the marrow of languages independently of the bones, for the chance of finding details to corroborate his own views, or possibly even to detect Grampus in some oversight or textual tampering. All other work was neglected: rare clients were sent away and amazed editors found this maniac indifferent to his chance of getting book-parcels from them. It was many months before Merman had satisfied himself that he was strong enough to face round upon his adversary. But at last he had prepared sixty condensed pages of eager argument which seemed to him worthy to rank with the best models of controversial writing. He had acknowledged his mistakes, but had re-stated his theory so as to show that it was left intact in spite of them; and he had even found cases in which Ziphius, Microps, Scrag Whale the explorer, and other Cetaceans of unanswerable authority, were decidedly at issue with Grampus. Especially a passage cited by this last from that greatest of fossils Megalosaurus was demonstrated by Merman to be capable of three different interpretations, all preferable to that chosen by Grampus, who took the words in their most literal sense; for, 1°, the incomparable Saurian, alike unequaled in close observation and far-glancing comprehensiveness, might have meant those words ironically; 2°, *motzis* was probably a false reading for *potzis*, in which case its bearing was reversed; and 3°, it is known that in the age of the Saurians there were conceptions about the *motzis* which entirely remove it from the category of things comprehensible in an age when Saurians run ridiculously small: all which views were godfathered by names quite fit to be ranked with that of Grampus. In fine, Merman wound up his rejoinder by sincerely thanking the eminent adversary without whose fierce assault he might not have undertaken a revision in the course of which he had met with unexpected and striking confirmations of his own fundamental views. Evidently Merman's anger was at white heat.

The rejoinder being complete, all that remained was to

find a suitable medium for its publication. This was not so easy. Distinguished mediums would not lend themselves to contradictions of Grampus, or if they would, Merman's article was too long and too abstruse, while he would not consent to leave anything out of an article which had no superfluities; for all this happened years ago when the world was at a different stage. At last, however, he got his rejoinder printed, and not on hard terms, since the medium, in every sense modest, did not ask him to pay for its insertion.

But if Merman expected to call out Grampus again, he was mistaken. Everybody felt it too absurd that Merman should undertake to correct Grampus in matters of erudition, and an eminent man has something else to do than to refute a petty objector twice over. What was essential had been done: the public had been enabled to form a true judgment of Merman's incapacity, the Magicodumbras and Zuzumotzis were but subsidiary elements in Grampus's system, and Merman might now be dealt with by younger members of the master's school. But he had at least the satisfaction of finding that he had raised a discussion which would not be let die. The followers of Grampus took it up with an ardor and industry of research worthy of their exemplar. Butzkopf made it the subject of an elaborate *Einleitung* to his important work, *Die Bedeutung des Ægyptischen Labyrinthes;* and Dagong, in a remarkable address which he delivered to a learned society in Central Europe, introduced Merman's theory with so much power of sarcasm that it became a theme of more or less derisive allusion to men of many tongues. Merman with his Magicodumbras and Zuzumotzis was on the way to become a proverb, being used illustratively by many able journalists who took those names of questionable things to be Merman's own invention, "than which," said one of the graver guides, "we can recall few more melancholy examples of speculative aberration." Naturally the subject passed into popular literature, and figured very commonly in advertised programmes! The fluent Loligo, the formidable Shark, and a younger member of his remarkable family known as S. Catulus, made a special reputation by their numerous articles, eloquent, lively, or abusive, all on the same theme, under titles ingeniously varied, alliterative, sonorous, or boldly fanciful; such as, "Moments with Mr. Merman," "Mr. Merman and the Magicodumbras," "Greenland Grampus and Proteus Mer-

man," "Grampian Heights and their Climbers, or the New Excelsior." They tossed him on short sentences; they swathed him in paragraphs of winding imagery; they found him at once a mere plagiarist and a theorizer of unexampled perversity, ridiculously wrong about *potzis* and ignorant of Pali; they hinted, indeed, at certain things which to their knowledge he had silently brooded over in his boyhood, and seemed tolerably well assured that this preposterous attempt to gainsay an incomparable Cetacean of world-wide fame had its origin in a peculiar mixture of bitterness and eccentricity which, rightly estimated and seen in its definite proportions, would furnish the best key to his argumentation. All alike were sorry for Merman's lack of sound learning, but how could their readers be sorry? Sound learning would not have been amusing; and as it was, Merman was made to furnish these readers with amusement at no expense of trouble on their part. Even burlesque writers looked into his book to see where it could be made use of, and those who did not know him were desirous of meeting him at dinner as one likely to feed their comic vein.

On the other hand, he made a serious figure in sermons under the name of "Some" or "Others" who had attempted presumptuously to scale eminences too high and arduous for human ability, and had given an example of ignominious failure edifying to the humble Christian.

All this might be very advantageous for able persons whose superfluous fund of expression needed a paying investment, but the effect on Merman himself was unhappily not so transient as the busy writing and speaking of which he had become the occasion. His certainty that he was right naturally got stronger in proportion as the spirit of resistance was stimulated. The scorn and unfairness with which he felt himself to have been treated by those really competent to appreciate his ideas had galled him and made a chronic sore; and the exultant chorus of the incompetent seemed a pouring of vinegar on his wound. His brain became a registry of the foolish and ignorant objections made against him, and of continually amplified answers to these objections. Unable to get his answers printed, he had recourse to that more primitive mode of publication, oral transmission or button-holding, now generally regarded as a troublesome survival, and the once pleasant, flexible Merman was on the way to be shunned as a bore. His interest in new acquaintances turned

chiefly on the possibility that they would care about the Magicodumbras and Zuzumotzis; that they would listen to his complaints and exposures of unfairness, and not only accept copies of what he had written on the subject, but send him appreciative letters in acknowledgment. Repeated disappointment of such hopes tended to embitter him, and not the less because after a while the fashion of mentioning him died out, allusions to his theory were less understood, and people could only pretend to remember it. And all the while Merman was perfectly sure that his very opponents who had knowledge enough to be capable judges were aware that his book, whatever errors of statement they might detect in it, had served as a sort of divining-rod, pointing out hidden sources of historical interpretation; nay, his jealous examination discerned in a new work by Grampus himself a certain shifting of ground which—so poor Merman declared—was the sign of an intention gradually to appropriate the views of the man he had attempted to brand as an ignorant impostor.

And Julia? And the housekeeping?—the rent, food and clothing, which controversy can hardly supply unless it be of the kind that serves as a recommendation to certain posts. Controversial pamphlets have been known to earn large plums; but nothing of the sort could be expected from unpractical heresies about the Magicodumbras and Zuzumotzis. Painfully the contrary. Merman's reputation as a sober thinker, a safe writer, a sound lawyer, was irretrievably injured: the distractions of controversy had caused him to neglect useful editorial connections, and indeed his dwindling care for miscellaneous subjects made his contributions too dull to be desirable. Even if he could now have given a new turn to his concentration, and applied his talents so as to be ready to show himself an exceptionally qualified lawyer, he would only have been like an architect in competition, too late with his superior plans; he would not have had an opportunity of showing his qualification. He was thrown out of the course. The small capital which had filled up deficiencies of income was almost exhausted, and Julia, in the effort to make supplies equal to wants, had to use much ingenuity in diminishing the wants. The brave and affectionate woman whose small outline, so unimpressive against an illuminated background, held within it a good share of feminine heroism, did her best to keep up the charm of home and soothe her husband's excitement; parting with the best jewel

among her wedding presents in order to pay rent, without ever hinting to her husband that this sad result had come of his undertaking to convince people who only laughed at him. She was a resigned little creature, and reflected that some husbands took to drinking and others to forgery: hers had only taken to the Magicodumbras and Zuzumotzis, and was not unkind — only a little more indifferent to her and her two children than she had ever expected he would be, his mind being eaten up with "subjects," and constantly a little angry, not with her, but with everybody else, especially those who were celebrated.

This was the sad truth. Merman felt himself ill-used by the world, and thought very much worse of the world in consequence. The gall of his adversaries' ink had been sucked into his system and ran in his blood. He was still in the prime of life, but his mind was aged by that eager monotonous construction which comes of feverish excitement on a single topic and uses up the intellectual strength.

Merman had never been a rich man, but he was now conspicuously poor, and in need of the friends who had power or interest which he believed they could exert on his behalf. Their omitting or declining to give this help could not seem to him so clearly as to them an inevitable consequence of his having become impracticable, or at least of his passing for a man whose views were not likely to be safe and sober. Each friend in turn offended him, though unwillingly, and was suspected of wishing to shake him off. It was not altogether so; but poor Merman's society had undeniably ceased to be attractive, and it was difficult to help him. At last the pressure of want urged him to try for a post far beneath his earlier prospects, and he gained it. He holds it still, for he has no vices, and his domestic life has kept up a sweetening current of motive around and within him. Nevertheless, the bitter flavor mingling itself with all topics, the premature weariness and withering are irrevocably there. It is as if he had gone through a disease which alters what we call the constitution. He has long ceased to talk eagerly of the ideas which possess him, or to attempt making proselytes. The dial has moved onward, and he himself sees many of his former guesses in a new light. On the other hand, he has seen what he foreboded, that the main idea which was at the root of his too rash theorizing has been adopted by Grampus and received with general respect, no reference

being heard to the ridiculous figure this important conception made when ushered in by the incompetent "Others."

Now and then, on rare occasions, when a sympathetic *tête-à-tête* has restored some of his old expansiveness, he will tell a companion in a railway carriage, or other place of meeting favorable to autobiographical confidences, what has been the course of things in his particular case, as an example of the justice to be expected of the world. The companion usually allows for the bitterness of a disappointed man, and is secretly disinclined to believe that Grampus was to blame.

IV.

A MAN SURPRISED AT HIS ORIGINALITY.

Among the many acute sayings of La Rochefoucauld, there is hardly one more acute than this: "La plus grande ambition n'en a pas la moindre apparence lorsqu'elle se rencontre dans une impossibilité absolue d'arriver où elle aspire." Some of us might do well to use this hint in our treatment of acquaintances and friends from whom we are expecting gratitude because we are so very kind in thinking of them, inviting them, and even listening to what they say—considering how insignificant they must feel themselves to be. We are often fallaciously confident in supposing that our friend's state of mind is appropriate to our moderate estimate of his importance: almost as if we imagined the humble mollusk (so useful as an illustration) to have a sense of his own exceeding softness and low place in the scale of being. Your mollusk, on the contrary, is inwardly objecting to every other grade of solid rather than to himself. Accustomed to observe what we think an unwarrantable conceit exhibiting itself in ridiculous pretensions and forwardness to play the lion's part, in obvious self-complacency and loud peremptoriness, we are not on the alert to detect the egoistic claims of a more exorbitant kind often hidden under an apparent neutrality or an acquiescence in being put out of the question.

Thoughts of this kind occurred to me yesterday when I saw the name of Lentulus in the obituary. The majority of his acquaintances, I imagine, have always thought of him as a man justly unpretending and as nobody's rival; but some of them have perhaps been struck with surprise at his reserve in praising the works of his contemporaries, and have now and then felt themselves in need of a key to his remarks on men of celebrity in various departments. He was a man of fair position, deriving his income from a business in which he did nothing, at leisure to frequent clubs and at ease in giving dinners; well-looking, polite, and generally acceptable in society as a part of what we may call its bread-crumb—the neutral basis needful for the plums and spice. Why, then, did he speak of the modern Maro

or the modern Flaccus with a peculiarity in his tone of assent to other people's praise which might almost have led you to suppose that the eminent poet had borrowed money of him and showed an indisposition to repay? He had no criticism to offer, no sign of objection more specific than a slight cough, a scarcely perceptible pause before assenting, and an air of self-control in his utterance—as if certain considerations had determined him not to inform against the so-called poet, who to his knowledge was a mere versifier. If you had questioned him closely, he would perhaps have confessed that he did think something better might be done in the way of Eclogues and Georgics, or of Odes and Epodes, and that to his mind poetry was something very different from what had hitherto been known under that name.

For my own part, being of a superstitious nature, given readily to imagine alarming causes, I immediately, on first getting these mystic hints from Lentulus, concluded that he held a number of entirely original poems, or at the very least a revolutionary treatise on poetics, in that melancholy manuscript state to which works excelling all that is ever printed are necessarily condemned; and I was long timid in speaking of the poets when he was present. For what might not Lentulus have done, or be profoundly aware of, that would make my ignorant impressions ridiculous? One cannot well be sure of the negative in such a case, except through certain positives that bear witness to it; and those witnesses are not always to be got hold of. But time wearing on, I perceived that the attitude of Lentulus toward the philosophers was essentially the same as his attitude toward the poets; nay, there was something so much more decided in his mode of closing his mouth after brief speech on the former, there was such an air of rapt consciousness in his private hints as to his conviction that all thinking hitherto had been an elaborate mistake, and as to his own power of conceiving a sound basis for a lasting superstructure, that I began to believe less in the poetical stores, and to infer that the line of Lentulus lay rather in the rational criticism of our beliefs and in systematic construction. In this case I did not figure to myself the existence of formidable manuscripts ready for the press; for great thinkers are known to carry their theories growing within their minds long before committing them to paper, and the ideas which made a new passion for them when their locks were jet or auburn, remain per-

ilously unwritten, an inwardly developing condition of their successive selves, until the locks are gray or scanty. I only meditated improvingly on the way in which a man of exceptional faculties, and even carrying within him some of that fierce refiner's fire which is to purge away the dross of human error, may move about in society totally unrecognized, regarded as a person whose opinion is superfluous, and only rising into a power in emergencies of threatened black-balling. Imagine a Descartes or a Locke being recognized for nothing more than a good fellow and a perfect gentleman—what a painful view does such a picture suggest of impenetrable dullness in the society around them!

I would at all times rather be reduced to a cheaper estimate of a particular person, if by that means I can get a more cheerful view of my fellow-men generally; and I confess that in a certain curiosity which led me to cultivate Lentulus's acquaintance, my hope leaned to the discovery that he was a less remarkable man than he had seemed to imply. It would have been a grief to discover that he was bitter or malicious, but by finding him to be neither a mighty poet, nor a revolutionary poetical critic, nor an epoch-making philosopher, my admiration for the poets and thinkers whom he rated so low would recover all its buoyancy, and I should not be left to trust to that very suspicious sort of merit which constitutes an exception in the history of mankind, and recommends itself as the total abolitionist of all previous claims on our confidence. You are not greatly surprised at the infirm logic of the coachman who would persuade you to engage him by insisting that any other would be sure to rob you in the matter of hay and corn, thus demanding a difficult belief in him as the sole exception from the frailties of his calling; but it is rather astonishing that the wholesale decriers of mankind and its performances should be even more unwary in their reasoning than the coachman, since each of them not merely confides in your regarding himself as an exception, but overlooks the almost certain fact that you are wondering whether he inwardly excepts *you*. Now, conscious of entertaining some common opinions which seemed to fall under the mildly intimated but sweeping ban of Lentulus, my self-complacency was a little concerned.

Hence I deliberately attempted to draw out Lentulus in private dialogue, for it is the reverse of injury to a man

to offer him that hearing which he seems to have found nowhere else. And for whatever purposes silence may be equal to gold, it cannot be safely taken as an indication of specific ideas. I sought to know why Lentulus was more than indifferent to the poets, and what was that new poetry which he had either written or, as to its principles, distinctly conceived. But I presently found that he knew very little of any particular poet, and had a general notion of poetry as the use of artificial language to express unreal sentiments: he instanced "The Giaour," "Lalla Rookh," "The Pleasures of Hope," and "Ruin seize thee, ruthless King;" adding, "and plenty more." On my observing that he probably preferred a larger, simpler style, he emphatically assented. "Have you not," said I, "written something of that order?" "No; but I often compose as I go along. I see how things might be written as fine as Ossian, only with true ideas. The world has no notion what poetry will be."

It was impossible to disprove this, and I am always glad to believe that the poverty of our imagination is no measure of the world's resources Our posterity will no doubt get fuel in ways that we are unable to devise for them. But what this conversation persuaded me of was, that the birth with which the mind of Lentulus was pregnant could not be poetry, though I did not question that he composed as he went along, and that the exercise was accompanied with a great sense of power. This is a frequent experience in dreams, and much of our waking experience is but a dream in the daylight. Nay, for what I saw, the compositions might be fairly classed as Ossianic. But I was satisfied that Lentulus could not disturb my grateful admiration for the poets of all ages by eclipsing them, or by putting them under a new electric light of criticism.

Still, he had himself thrown the chief emphasis of his protest and his consciousness of corrective illumination on the philosophic thinking of our race; and his tone in assuring me that everything which had been done in that way was wrong—that Plato, Robert Owen, and Dr. Tuffle, who wrote in the "Regulator," were all equally mistaken—gave my superstitious nature a thrill of anxiety. After what had passed about the poets, it did not seem likely that Lentulus had all systems by heart; but who could say he had not seized that thread which may somewhere hang out loosely from the web of things and be the clue of unravelment? We need not go far to learn that a prophet

is not made by erudition. Lentulus at least had not the bias of a school; and if it turned out that he was in agreement with any celebrated thinker, ancient or modern, the agreement would have the value of an undesigned coincidence not due to forgotten reading. It was therefore with renewed curiosity that I engaged him on this large subject—the universal erroneousness of thinking up to the period when Lentulus began that process. And here I found him more copious than on the theme of poetry. He admitted that he did contemplate writing down his thoughts, but his difficulty was their abundance. Apparently he was like the woodcutter entering the thick forest and saying, "Where shall I begin?" The same obstacle appeared in a minor degree to cling about his verbal exposition, and accounted perhaps for his rather helter-skelter choice of remarks bearing on the number of unaddressed letters sent to the post-office; on what logic really is, as tending to support the buoyancy of human mediums and mahogany tables; on the probability of all miracles under all religions when explained by hidden laws, and my unreasonableness in supposing that their profuse occurrence at half a guinea an hour in recent times was anything more than a coincidence; on the hap-hazard way in which marriages are determined—showing the baselessness of social and moral schemes; and on his expectation that he should offend the scientific world when he told them what he thought of electricity as an agent.

No man's appearance could be graver or more gentleman-like than that of Lentulus as we walked along the Mall while he delivered these observations, understood by himself to have a regenerative bearing on human society. His wristbands and black gloves, his hat and nicely clipped hair, his laudable moderation in beard, and his evident discrimination in choosing his tailor, all seemed to excuse the prevalent estimate of him as a man untainted with heterodoxy, and likely to be so unencumbered with opinions that he would always be useful as an assenting and admiring listener. Men of science seeing him at their lectures doubtless flattered themselves that he came to learn from them; the philosophic ornaments of our time, expounding some of their luminous ideas in the social circle, took the meditative gaze of Lentulus for one of surprise not unmixed with a just reverence at such close reasoning toward so novel a conclusion; and those who are called men of the world considered him a good fellow who

might be asked to vote for a friend of their own and would have no troublesome notions to make him unaccommodating. You perceive how very much they were all mistaken, except in qualifying him as a good fellow.

This Lentulus certainly was, in the sense of being free from envy, hatred, and malice; and such freedom was all the more remarkable an indication of native benignity, because of his gaseous, illimitably expansive conceit. Yes, conceit; for that his enormous and contentedly ignorant confidence in his own rambling thoughts was usually clad in a decent silence, is no reason why it should be less strictly called by the name directly implying a complacent self-estimate unwarranted by performance. Nay, the total privacy in which he enjoyed his consciousness of inspiration was the very condition of its undisturbed placid nourishment and gigantic growth. Your audibly arrogant man exposes himself to tests: in attempting to make an impression on others he may possibly (not always) be made to feel his own lack of definiteness; and the demand for definiteness is to all of us a needful check on vague depreciation of what others do, and vague ecstatic trust in our own superior ability. But Lentulus was at once so unreceptive, and so little gifted with the power of displaying his miscellaneous deficiency of information, that there was really nothing to hinder his astonishment at the spontaneous crop of ideas which his mind secretly yielded. If it occurred to him that there were more meanings than one for the word "motive," since it sometimes meant the end aimed at and sometimes the feeling that prompted the aiming, and that the word "cause" was also of changeable import, he was naturally struck with the truth of his own perception, and was convinced that if this vein were well followed out much might be made of it. Men were evidently in the wrong about cause and effect, else why was society in the confused state we behold? And as to motive, Lentulus felt that when he came to write down his views he should look deeply into this kind of subject and show up thereby the anomalies of our social institutions; meanwhile the various aspects of "motive" and "cause" flitted about among the motley crowd of ideas which he regarded as original, and pregnant with reformative efficacy. For his unaffected goodwill made him regard all his insight as only valuable because it tended toward reform.

The respectable man had got into his illusory maze of discoveries by letting go that clue of conformity in his

thinking which he had kept fast hold of in his tailoring and manners. He regarded heterodoxy as a power in itself, and took his inacquaintance with doctrines for a creative dissidence. But his epitaph needs not to be a melancholy one. His benevolent disposition was more effective for good than his silent presumption for harm. He might have been mischievous but for the lack of words: instead of being astonished at his inspirations in private, he might have clad his addled originalities, disjointed commonplaces, blind denials, and balloon-like conclusions, in that mighty sort of language which would have made a new koran for a knot of followers. I mean no disrespect to the ancient koran, but one would not desire the roc to lay more eggs and give us a whole wing-flapping brood to soar and make twilight.

Peace be with Lentulus, for he has left us in peace. Blessed is the man who, having nothing to say, abstains from giving us wordy evidence of the fact—from calling on us to look through a heap of millet-seed in order to be sure that there is no pearl in it.

V.

A TOO DEFERENTIAL MAN.

A LITTLE unpremeditated insincerity must be indulged under the stress of social intercourse. The talk even of an honest man must often represent merely his wish to be inoffensive or agreeable rather than his genuine opinion or feeling on the matter in hand. His thought, if uttered, might be wounding; or he has not the ability to utter it with exactness and snatches at a loose paraphrase; or he has really no genuine thought on the question and is driven to fill up the vacancy by borrowing the remarks in vogue. These are the winds and currents we have all to steer amongst, and they are often too strong for our truthfulness or our wit. Let us not bear too hardly on each other for this common incidental frailty, or think that we rise superior to it by dropping all considerateness and deference.

But there are studious, deliberate forms of insincerity, which it is fair to be impatient with: Hinze's, for example. From his name you might suppose him to be German: in fact, his family is Alsatian, but has been settled in England for more than one generation. He is the superlatively deferential man, and walks about with murmured wonder at the wisdom and discernment of everybody who talks to him. He cultivates the low-toned *tête-à-tête*, keeping his hat carefully in his hand and often stroking it, while he smiles with downcast eyes, as if to relieve his feelings under the pressure of the remarkable conversation which it is his honor to enjoy at the present moment. I confess to some rage on hearing him yesterday talking to Felicia, who is certainly a clever woman, and, without any unusual desire to show her cleverness, occasionally says something of her own or makes an allusion which is not quite common. Still, it must happen to her as to every one else to speak of many subjects on which the best things were said long ago, and in conversation with a person who has been newly introduced those well-worn themes naturally recur as a further development of salutations and preliminary media of understanding, such as pipes, chocolate, or mastic-chewing, which serve to confirm the impression

that our new acquaintance is on a civilized footing and has enough regard for formulas to save us from shocking outbursts of individualism, to which we are always exposed with the tamest bear or baboon. Considered purely as a matter of information, it cannot any longer be important for us to learn that a British subject included in the last census holds Shakespeare to be supreme in the presentation of character; still, it is as admissible for any one to make this statement about himself as to rub his hands and tell you that the air is brisk, if only he will let it fall as a matter of course, with a parenthetic lightness, and not announce his adhesion to a commonplace with an emphatic insistence, as if it were a proof of singular insight. We mortals should chiefly like to talk to each other out of goodwill and fellowship, not for the sake of hearing revelations or being stimulated by witticisms; and I have usually found that it is the rather dull person who appears to be disgusted with his contemporaries because they are not always strikingly original, and to satisfy whom the party at a country house should have included the prophet Isaiah, Plato, Francis Bacon, and Voltaire. It is always your heaviest bore who is astonished at the tameness of modern celebrities: naturally; for a little of his company has reduced them to a state of flaccid fatigue. It is right and meet that there should be an abundant utterance of good sound commonplaces. Part of an agreeable talker's charm is that he lets them fall continually with no more than their due emphasis. Giving a pleasant voice to what we are all assured of, makes a sort of wholesome air for more special and dubious remark to move in.

Hence it seemed to me far from unbecoming in Felicia that in her first dialogue with Hinze, previously quite a stranger to her, her observations were those of an ordinarily refined and well-educated woman on standard subjects, and might have been printed in a manual of polite topics and creditable opinions. She had no desire to astonish a man of whom she had heard nothing particular. It was all the more exasperating to see and hear Hinze's reception of her well-bred conformities. Felicia's acquaintances know her as the suitable wife of a distinguished man, a sensible, vivacious, kindly disposed woman, helping her husband with graceful apologies written and spoken, and making her receptions agreeable to all comers. But you would have imagined that Hinze had been prepared by general report to regard this introduction to her as an

opportunity comparable to an audience of the Delphic Sibyl. When she had delivered herself on the changes in Italian travel, on the difficulty of reading Ariosto in these busy times, on the want of equilibrium in French political affairs, and on the pre-eminence of German music, he would know what to think. Felicia was evidently embarrassed by his reverent wonder, and, in dread lest she should seem to be playing the oracle, became somewhat confused, stumbling on her answers rather than choosing them. But this made no difference to Hinze's rapt attention and subdued eagerness of inquiry. He continued to put large questions, bending his head slightly that his eyes might be a little lifted in awaiting her reply.

"What, may I ask, is your opinion as to the state of Art in England?"

"Oh," said Felicia, with a light deprecatory laugh, "I think it suffers from two diseases—bad taste in the patrons and want of inspiration in the artists."

"That is true indeed," said Hinze, in an undertone of deep conviction. "You have put your finger with strict accuracy on the causes of decline. To a cultivated taste like yours this must be particularly painful."

"I did not say there was actual decline," said Felicia, with a touch of *brusquerie*. "I don't set myself up as the great personage whom nothing can please."

"That would be too severe a misfortune for others," says my complimentary ape. "You approve, perhaps, of Rosemary's 'Babes in the Wood,' as something fresh and *naïve* in sculpture?"

"I think it enchanting."

"Does he know that? Or *will* you permit me tell him?"

"Heaven forbid! It would be an impertinence in me to praise a work of his—to pronounce on its quality; and that I happen to like it can be of no consequence to him."

Here was an occasion for Hinze to smile down on his hat and stroke it—Felicia's ignorance that her praise was inestimable being peculiarly noteworthy to an observer of mankind. Presently he was quite sure that her favorite author was Shakespeare, and wished to know what she thought of Hamlet's madness. When she had quoted Wilhelm Meister on this point, and had afterward testified that "Lear" was beyond adequate presentation, that "Julius Cæsar" was an effective acting play, and that a poet may know a good deal about human nature while knowing little

of geography, Hinze appeared so impressed with the plenitude of these revelations that he recapitulated them, weaving them together with threads of compliment—"As you very justly observed;" and—"It is most true, as you say;" and—"It were well if others noted what you have remarked."

Some listeners incautious in their epithets would have called Hinze an "ass." For my part I would never insult that intelligent and unpretending animal who no doubt brays with perfect simplicity and substantial meaning to those acquainted with his idiom, and if he feigns more submission than he feels, has weighty reasons for doing so—I would never, I say, insult that historic and ill-appreciated animal, the ass, by giving his name to a man whose continuous pretense is so shallow in its motive, so unexcused by any sharp appetite as this of Hinze's.

But perhaps you would say that his adulatory manner was originally adopted under strong promptings of self-interest, and that his absurdly over-acted deference to persons from whom he expects no patronage is the unreflecting persistence of habit—just as those who live with the deaf will shout to everybody else.

And you might indeed imagine that in talking to Tulpian, who has considerable interest at his disposal, Hinze had a desired appointment in his mind. Tulpian is appealed to on innumerable subjects, and if he is unwilling to express himself on any one of them, says so with instructive copiousness: he is much listened to, and his utterances are registered and reported with more or less exactitude. But I think he has no other listener who comports himself as Hinze does — who, figuratively speaking, carries about a small spoon ready to pick up any dusty crumb of opinion that the eloquent man may have let drop. Tulpian, with reverence be it said, has some rather absurd notions, such as a mind of large discourse often finds room for: they slip about among his higher conceptions and multitudinous acquirements like disreputable characters at a national celebration in some vast cathedral, where to the ardent soul all is glorified by rainbow light and grand associations: any vulgar detective knows them for what they are. But Hinze is especially fervid in his desire to hear Tulpian dilate on his crotchets, and is rather troublesome to bystanders in asking them whether they have read the various fugitive writings in which these crotchets have been published. If an expert is explaining some matter on

which you desire to know the evidence, Hinze teases you with Tulpian's guesses, and asks the expert what he thinks of them.

In general, Hinze delights in the citation of opinions, and would hardly remark that the sun shone without an air of respectful appeal or fervid adhesion. The "Iliad," one sees, would impress him little if it were not for what Mr. Fugleman has lately said about it; and if you mention an image or sentiment in Chaucer he seems not to heed the bearing of your reference, but immediately tells you that Mr. Hautboy, too, regards Chaucer as a poet of the first order, and he is delighted to find that two such judges as you and Hautboy are at one.

What is the reason of all this subdued ecstasy, moving about, hat in hand, with well-dressed hair and attitudes of unimpeachable correctness? Some persons conscious of sagacity decide at once that Hinze knows what he is about in flattering Tulpian, and has a carefully appraised end to serve though they may not see it. They are misled by the common mistake of supposing that men's behavior, whether habitual or occasional, is chiefly determined by a distinctly conceived motive, a definite object to be gained or a definite evil to be avoided. The truth is, that, the primitive wants of nature once tolerably satisfied, the majority of mankind, even in a civilized life full of solicitations, are with difficulty aroused to the distinct conception of an object toward which they will direct their actions with careful adaptation, and it is yet rarer to find one who can persist in the systematic pursuit of such an end. Few lives are shaped, few characters formed, by the contemplation of definite consequences seen from a distance and made the goal of continuous effort or the beacon of a constantly avoided danger: such control by foresight, such vivid picturing and practical logic are the distinction of exceptionally strong natures; but society is chiefly made up of human beings whose daily acts are all performed either in unreflecting obedience to custom and routine or from immediate promptings of thought or feeling to execute an immediate purpose. They pay their poor-rates, give their vote in affairs political or parochial, wear a certain amount of starch, hinder boys from tormenting the helpless, and spend money on tedious observances called pleasures, without mentally adjusting these practices to their own well-understood interest or to the general, ultimate welfare of the human race; and when they fall into ungraceful com-

pliment, excessive smiling or other luckless efforts of complaisant behavior, these are but the tricks or habits gradually formed under the successive promptings of a wish to be agreeable, stimulated day by day without any widening resources for gratifying the wish. It does not in the least follow that they are seeking by studied hypocrisy to get something for themselves. And so with Hinze's deferential bearing, complimentary parentheses, and worshipful tones, which seem to some like the over-acting of a part in a comedy. He expects no appointment or other appreciable gain through Tulpian's favor; he has no doubleness toward Felicia; there is no sneering or backbiting obverse to his ecstatic admiration. He is very well off in the world, and cherishes no unsatisfied ambition that could feed design and direct flattery. As you perceive, he has had the education and other advantages of a gentleman without being conscious of marked result, such as a decided preference for any particular ideas or functions: his mind is furnished as hotels are, with everything for occasional and transient use. But one cannot be an Englishman and gentleman in general: it is in the nature of things that one must have an individuality, though it may be of an often-repeated type. As Hinze in growing to maturity had grown into a particular form and expression of person, so he necessarily gathered a manner and frame of speech which made him additionally recognizable. His nature is not tuned to the pitch of a genuine direct admiration, only to an attitudinizing deference which does not fatigue itself with the formation of real judgments. All human achievement must be wrought down to this spoon-meat — this mixture of other persons' washy opinions and his own flux of reverence for what is third-hand, before Hinze can find a relish for it.

He has no more leading characteristic than the desire to stand well with those who are justly distinguished; he has no base admirations, and you may know by his entire presentation of himself, from the management of his hat to the angle at which he keeps his right foot, that he aspires to correctness. Desiring to behave becomingly and also to make a figure in dialogue, he is only like the bad artist whose picture is a failure. We may pity these ill-gifted strivers, but not pretend that their works are pleasant to behold. A man is bound to know something of his own weight and muscular dexterity, and the puny athlete is called foolish before he is seen to be thrown. Hinze has

not the stuff in him to be at once agreeably conversational and sincere, and he has got himself up to be at all events agreeably conversational. Notwithstanding this deliberateness of intention in his talk he is unconscious of falsity, for he has not enough of deep and lasting impression to find a contrast or diversity between his words and his thoughts. He is not fairly to be called a hypocrite, but I have already confessed to the more exasperation at his make-believe reverence, because it has no deep hunger to excuse it.

VI.

ONLY TEMPER.

WHAT is temper? Its primary meaning, the proportion and mode in which qualities are mingled, is much neglected in popular speech, yet even here the word often carries a reference to an habitual state or general tendency of the organism in distinction from what are held to be specific virtues and vices. As people confess to bad memory without expecting to sink in mental reputation, so we hear a man declared to have a bad temper and yet glorified as the possessor of every high quality. When he errs or in any way commits himself, his temper is accused, not his character, and it is understood that but for a brutal, bearish mood he is kindness itself. If he kicks small animals, swears violently at a servant who mistakes orders, or is grossly rude to his wife, it is remarked apologetically that these things mean nothing—they are all temper.

Certainly there is a limit to this form of apology, and the forgery of a bill, or the ordering of goods without any prospect of paying for them, has never been set down to an unfortunate habit of sulkiness or of irascibility. But on the whole there is a peculiar exercise of indulgence toward the manifestations of bad temper which tends to encourage them, so that we are in danger of having among us a number of virtuous persons who conduct themselves detestably, just as we have hysterical patients who, with sound organs, are apparently laboring under many sorts of organic disease. Let it be admitted, however, that a man may be a "good fellow" and yet have a bad temper, so bad that we recognize his merits with reluctance, and are inclined to resent his occasionally amiable behavior as an unfair demand on our admiration.

Touchwood is that kind of good fellow. He is by turns insolent, quarrelsome, repulsively haughty to innocent people who approach him with respect, neglectful of his friends, angry in face of legitimate demands, procrastinating in the fulfillment of such demands, prompted to rude words and harsh looks by a moody disgust with his

fellow-men in general—and yet, as everybody will assure you, the soul of honor, a steadfast friend, a defender of the oppressed, an affectionate-hearted creature. Pity that, after a certain experience of his moods, his intimacy becomes insupportable! A man who uses his balmorals to tread on your toes with much frequency and an unmistakable emphasis may prove a fast friend in adversity, but meanwhile your adversity has not arrived and your toes are tender. The daily sneer or growl at your remarks is not to be made amends for by a possible eulogy or defense of your understanding against depreciators who may not present themselves, and on an occasion which may never arise. I cannot submit to a chronic state of blue and green bruise as a form of insurance against an accident.

Touchwood's bad temper is of the contradicting, pugnacious sort. He is the honorable gentleman in opposition, whatever proposal or proposition may be broached, and when others join him he secretly damns their superfluous agreement, quickly discovering that his way of stating the case is not exactly theirs. An invitation or any sign of expectation throws him into an attitude of refusal. Ask his concurrence in a benevolent measure: he will not decline to give it, because he has a real sympathy with good aims; but he complies resentfully, though where he is let alone he will do much more than any one would have thought of asking for. No man would shrink with greater sensitiveness from the imputation of not paying his debts, yet when a bill is sent in with any promptitude he is inclined to make the tradesman wait for the money he is in such a hurry to get. One sees that this antagonistic temper must be much relieved by finding a particular object, and that its worst moments must be those where the mood is that of vague resistance, there being nothing specific to oppose. Touchwood is never so little engaging as when he comes down to breakfast with a cloud on his brow, after parting from you the night before with an affectionate effusiveness at the end of a confidential conversation which has assured you of mutual understanding. Impossible that you can have committed any offense. If mice have disturbed him, that is not your fault; but, nevertheless, your cheerful greeting had better not convey any reference to the weather, else it will be met by a sneer which, taking you unawares, may give you a crushing sense that you make a poor figure with your cheerfulness, which was not asked for. Some daring person perhaps

introduces another topic, and uses the delicate flattery of appealing to Touchwood for his opinion, the topic being included in his favorite studies. An indistinct muttering, with a look at the carving-knife in reply, teaches that daring person how ill he has chosen a market for his deference. If Touchwood's behavior affects you very closely, you had better break your leg in the course of the day: his bad temper will then vanish at once; he will take a painful journey on your behalf; he will sit up with you night after night; he will do all the work of your department so as to save you from any loss in consequence of your accident; he will be even uniformly tender to you till you are well on your legs again, when he will some fine morning insult you without provocation, and make you wish that his generous goodness to you had not closed your lips against retort.

It is not always necessary that a friend should break his leg, for Touchwood to feel compunction and endeavor to make amends for his bearishness or insolence. He becomes spontaneously conscious that he has misbehaved, and he is not only ashamed of himself, but has the better prompting to try and heal any wound he has inflicted. Unhappily the habit of being offensive "without meaning it" leads usually to a way of making amends which the injured person cannot but regard as a being amiable without meaning it. The kindnesses, the complimentary indications or assurances, are apt to appear in the light of a penance adjusted to the foregoing lapses, and by the very contrast they offer call up a keener memory of the wrong they atone for. They are not a spontaneous prompting of goodwill, but an elaborate compensation. And, in fact, Dion's atoning friendliness has a ring of artificiality. Because he formerly disguised his good feeling toward you he now expresses more than he quite feels. It is in vain. Having made you extremely uncomfortable last week he has absolutely diminished his power of making you happy to-day: he struggles against this result by excessive effort, but he has taught you to observe his fitfulness rather than to be warmed by his episodic show of regard.

I suspect that many persons who have an uncertain, incalculable temper flatter themselves that it enhances their fascination; but perhaps they are under the prior mistake of exaggerating the charm which they suppose to be thus strengthened; in any case they will do well not to trust in the attractions of caprice and moodiness for a

long continuance or for close intercourse. A pretty woman may fan the flame of distant adorers by harassing them, but if she lets one of them make her his wife, the point of view from which he will look at her poutings and tossings and mysterious inability to be pleased will be seriously altered. And if slavery to a pretty woman, which seems among the least conditional forms of abject service, will not bear too great a strain from her bad temper even though her beauty remain the same, it is clear that a man whose claims lie in his high character or high performances had need impress us very constantly with his peculiar value and indispensableness, if he is to test our patience by an uncertainty of temper which leaves us absolutely without grounds for guessing how he will receive our persons or humbly advanced opinions, or what line he will take on any but the most momentous occasions.

For it is among the repulsive effects of this bad temper, which is supposed to be compatible with shining virtues, that it is apt to determine a man's sudden adhesion to an opinion, whether on a personal or an impersonal matter, without leaving him time to consider his grounds. The adhesion is sudden and momentary, but it either forms a precedent for his line of thought and action, or it is presently seen to have been inconsistent with his true mind. This determination of partisanship by temper has its worst effects in the career of the public man, who is always in danger of getting so enthralled by his own words that he looks into facts and questions not to get rectifying knowledge, but to get evidence that will justify his actual attitude which was assumed under an impulse dependent on something else than knowledge. There has been plenty of insistance on the evil of swearing by the words of a master, and having the judgment controlled by a "He said it;" but a much worse woe to befall a man is to have every judgment controlled by an "I said it"—to make a divinity of his own short-sightedness or passion-led aberration and explain the world in its honor. There is hardly a more pitiable degradation than this for a man of high gifts. Hence I cannot join with those who wish that Touchwood, being young enough to enter on public life, should get elected for Parliament and use his excellent abilities to serve his country in that conspicuous manner. For hitherto, in the less momentous incidents of private life, his capricious temper has only produced the minor evil of inconsistency, and he is even greatly at ease in contradict-

ing himself, provided he can contradict you, and disappoint any smiling expectation you may have shown that the impressions you are uttering are likely to meet with his sympathy, considering that the day before he himself gave you the example which your mind is following. He is at least free from those fetters of self-justification which are the curse of parliamentary speaking, and what I rather desire for him is that he should produce the great book which he is generally pronounced capable of writing, and put his best self imperturbably on record for the advantage of society; because I should then have steady ground for bearing with his diurnal incalculableness, and could fix my gratitude as by a strong staple to that unvarying monumental service. Unhappily, Touchwood's great powers have been only so far manifested as to be believed in, not demonstrated. Everybody rates them highly, and thinks that whatever he chose to do would be done in a first-rate manner. Is it his love of disappointing complacent expectancy which has gone so far as to keep up this lamentable negation, and made him resolve not to write the comprehensive work which he would have written if nobody had expected it of him?

One can see that if Touchwood were to become a public man and take to frequent speaking on platforms or from his seat in the House, it would hardly be possible for him to maintain much integrity of opinion, or to avoid courses of partisanship which a healthy public sentiment would stamp with discredit. Say that he were endowed with the purest honesty, it would inevitably be dragged captive by this mysterious, Protean bad temper. There would be the fatal public necessity of justifying oratorical Temper which had got on its legs in its bitter mood and made insulting imputations, or of keeping up some decent show of consistency with opinions vented out of Temper's contradictoriness. And words would have to be followed up by acts of adhesion.

Certainly, if a bad-tempered man can be admirably virtuous, he must be so under extreme difficulties. I doubt the possibility that a high order of character can coexist with a temper like Touchwood's. For it is of the nature of such temper to interrupt the formation of healthy mental habits, which depend on a growing harmony between perception, conviction and impulse. There may be good feelings, good deeds—for a human nature may pack endless varieties and blessed inconsistencies in its

windings—but it is essential to what is worthy to be called high character, that it may be safely calculated on, and that its qualities shall have taken the form of principles or laws habitually, if not perfectly, obeyed.

If a man frequently passes unjust judgments, takes up false attitudes, intermits his acts of kindness with rude behavior or cruel words, and falls into the consequent vulgar error of supposing that he can make amends by labored agreeableness, I cannot consider such courses any the less ugly because they are ascribed to "temper." Especially I object to the assumption that his having a fundamentally good disposition is either an apology or a compensation for his bad behavior. If his temper yesterday made him lash the horses, upset the curricle and cause a breakage in my rib, I feel it no compensation that to-day he vows he will drive me anywhere in the gentlest manner any day as long as he lives. Yesterday was what it was, my rib is paining me, it is not a main object of my life to be driven by Touchwood—and I have no confidence in his lifelong gentleness. The utmost form of placability I am capable of is to try and remember his better deeds already performed, and, mindful of my own offenses, to bear him no malice. But I cannot accept his amends.

If the bad-tempered man wants to apologize, he had need to do it on a large public scale, make some beneficent discovery, produce some stimulating work of genius, invent some powerful process—prove himself such a good to contemporary multitudes and future generations, as to make the discomfort he causes his friends and acquaintances a vanishing quantity, a trifle even in their own estimate.

VII.

A POLITICAL MOLECULE.

THE most arrant denier must admit that a man often furthers larger ends than he is conscious of, and that while he is transacting his particular affairs with the narrow pertinacity of a respectable ant, he subserves an economy larger than any purpose of his own. Society is happily not dependent for the growth of fellowship on the small majority already endowed with comprehensive sympathy: any molecule of the body politic working toward his own interest in an orderly way gets his understanding more or less penetrated with the fact that his interest is included in that of a large number. I have watched several political molecules being educated in this way by the nature of things into a faint feeling of fraternity. But at this moment I am thinking of Spike, an elector who voted on the side of Progress though he was not inwardly attached to it under that name. For abstractions are deities having many specific names, local habitations, and forms of activity, and so get a multitude of devout servants who care no more for them under their highest titles than the celebrated person who, putting with forcible brevity a view of human motives now much insisted on, asked what Posterity had done for him that he should care for Posterity? To many minds even among the ancients (thought by some to have been invariably poetical) the goddess of wisdom was doubtless worshipped simply as the patroness of spinning and weaving. Now spinning and weaving from a manufacturing, wholesale point of view, was the chief form under which Spike from early years had unconsciously been a devotee of Progress.

He was a political molecule of the most gentlemanlike appearance, not less than six feet high, and showing the utmost nicety in the care of his person and equipment. His umbrella was especially remarkable for its neatness, though perhaps he swung it unduly in walking. His complexion was fresh, his eyes small, bright, and twinkling. He was seen to great advantage in a hat and greatcoat—garments frequently fatal to the impressiveness of shorter

figures; but when he was uncovered in the drawing-room, it was impossible not to observe that his head shelved off too rapidly from the eyebrows toward the crown, and that his length of limb seemed to have used up his mind so as to cause an air of abstraction from conversational topics. He appeared, indeed, to be preoccupied with a sense of his exquisite cleanliness, clapped his hands together and rubbed them frequently, straightened his back, and even opened his mouth and closed it again with a slight snap, apparently for no other purpose than the confirmation to himself of his own powers in that line. These are innocent exercises, but they are not such as give weight to a man's personality. Sometimes Spike's mind, emerging from its preoccupation, burst forth in a remark delivered with smiling zest; as, that he did like to see gravel walks well rolled, or that a lady should always wear the best jewelry, or that a bride was a most interesting object; but finding these ideas received rather coldly, he would relapse into abstraction, draw up his back, wrinkle his brows longitudinally, and seem to regard society, even including gravel walks, jewelry, and brides, as essentially a poor affair. Indeed his habit of mind was desponding, and he took melancholy views as to the possible extent of human pleasure and the value of existence. Especially after he had made his fortune in the cotton manufacture, and had thus attained the chief object of his ambition—the object which had engaged his talent for order and persevering application. For his easy leisure caused him much *ennui*. He was abstemious, and had none of those temptations to sensual excess which fill up a man's time first with indulgence and then with the process of getting well from its effects. He had not, indeed, exhausted the sources of knowledge, but here again his notions of human pleasure were narrowed by his want of appetite; for though he seemed rather surprised at the consideration that Alfred the Great was a Catholic, or that apart from the Ten Commandments any conception of moral conduct had occurred to mankind, he was not stimulated to further inquiries on these remote matters. Yet he aspired to what he regarded as intellectual society, willingly entertained beneficed clergymen, and bought the books he heard spoken of, arranging them carefully on the shelves of what he called his library, and occasionally sitting alone in the same room with them. But some minds seem well glazed by nature against the admission

of knowledge, and Spike's was one of them. It was not, however, entirely so with regard to politics. He had had a strong opinion about the Reform Bill, and saw clearly that the large trading towns ought to send members. Portraits of the Reform heroes hung framed and glazed in his library: he prided himself on being a Liberal. In this last particular, as well as in not giving benefactions and not making loans without interest, he showed unquestionable firmness; and on the Repeal of the Corn Laws, again, he was thoroughly convinced. His mind was expansive toward foreign markets, and his vivid imagination could see that the people from whom he took corn might be able to take the cotton goods which they had hitherto dispensed with. On his conduct in these political concerns, his wife, otherwise influential as a woman who belonged to a family with a title in it, and who had condescended in marrying him, could gain no hold: she had to blush a little at what was called her husband's "radicalism"—an epithet which was a very unfair impeachment of Spike, who never went to the root of anything. But he understood his own trading affairs, and in this way became a genuine, constant political element. If he had been born a little later he could have been accepted as an eligible member of Parliament, and if he had belonged to a high family he might have done for a member of the Government. Perhaps his indifference to "views" would have passed for administrative judiciousness, and he would have been so generally silent that he must often have been silent in the right place. But this is empty speculation: there is no warrant for saying what Spike would have been and known so as to have made a calculable political element, if he had not been educated by having to manage his trade. A small mind trained to useful occupation for the satisfying of private need becomes a representative of genuine class-needs. Spike objected to certain items of legislation because they hampered his own trade, but his neighbors' trade was hampered by the same causes; and though he would have been simply selfish in a question of light or water between himself and a fellow-townsman, his need for a change in legislation, being shared by all his neighbors in trade, ceased to be simply selfish, and raised him to a sense of common injury and common benefit. True, if the law could have been changed for the benefit of his particular business, leaving the cotton trade in general in a sorry

condition while he prospered, Spike might not have thought that result intolerably unjust; but the nature of things did not allow of such a result being contemplated as possible; it allowed of an enlarged market for Spike only through the enlargement of his neighbors' market, and the Possible is always the ultimate master of our efforts and desires. Spike was obliged to contemplate a general benefit, and thus became public-spirited in spite of himself. Or rather, the nature of things transmuted his active egoism into a demand for a public benefit.

Certainly if Spike had been born a marquis he could not have had the same chance of being useful as a political element. But he might have had the same appearance, have been equally null in conversation, skeptical as to the reality of pleasure, and destitute of historical knowledge; perhaps even dimly disliking Jesuitism as a quality in Catholic minds, or regarding Bacon as the inventor of physical science. The depth of middle-aged gentlemen's ignorance will never be known, for want of public examinations in this branch.

VIII.

THE WATCH-DOG OF KNOWLEDGE.

MORDAX is an admirable man, ardent in intellectual work, public-spirited, affectionate, and able to find the right words in conveying ingenious ideas or elevated feeling. Pity that to all these graces he cannot add what would give them the utmost finish—the occasional admission that he has been in the wrong, the occasional frank welcome of a new idea as something not before present to his mind! But no: Mordax's self-respect seems to be of that fiery quality which demands that none but the monarchs of thought shall have an advantage over him, and in the presence of contradiction or the threat of having his notions corrected, he becomes astonishingly unscrupulous and cruel for so kindly and conscientious a man.

"You are fond of attributing those fine qualities to Mordax," said Acer, the other day, "but I have not much belief in virtues that are always requiring to be asserted in spite of appearances against them. True fairness and goodwill show themselves precisely where his are conspicuously absent. I mean, in recognizing claims which the rest of the world are not likely to stand up for. It does not need much love of truth and justice in me to say that Aldebaran is a bright star, or Isaac Newton the greatest of discoverers; nor much kindliness in me to want my notes to be heard above the rest in a chorus of hallelujahs to one already crowned. It is my way to apply tests. Does the man who has the ear of the public use his advantage tenderly toward poor fellows who may be hindered of their due if he treats their pretensions with scorn? That is my test of his justice and benevolence."

My answer was, that his system of moral tests might be as delusive as what ignorant people take to be tests of intellect and learning. If the scholar or *savant* cannot answer their haphazard questions on the shortest notice, their belief in his capacity is shaken. But the better informed have given up the Johnsonian theory of mind as a pair of legs able to walk east or west according to choice. Intellect is no longer taken to be a ready-made dose of ability to attain eminence (or mediocrity) in all depart-

ments; it is even admitted that application in one line of study or practice has often a laming effect in other directions, and that an intellectual quality or special facility which is a furtherance in one medium of effort is a drag in another. We have convinced ourselves by this time that a man may be a sage in celestial physics and a poor creature in the purchase of seed-corn, or even in theorizing about the affections; that he may be a mere fumbler in physiology and yet show a very keen insight into human motives; that he may seem the "poor Poll" of the company in conversation and yet write with some humorous vigor. It is not true that a man's intellectual power is like the strength of a timber beam, to be measured by its weakest point.

Why should we any more apply that fallacious standard of what is called consistency to a man's moral nature, and argue against the existence of fine impulses or habits of feeling in relation to his actions generally, because those better movements are absent in a class of cases which act peculiarly on an irritable form of his egoism? The mistake might be corrected by our taking notice that the ungenerous words or acts which seem to us the most utterly incompatible with good dispositions in the offender, are those which offend ourselves. All other persons are able to draw a milder conclusion. Laniger, who has a temper but no talent for repartee, having been run down in a fierce way by Mordax, is inwardly persuaded that the highly-lauded man is a wolf at heart: he is much tried by perceiving that his own friends seem to think no worse of the reckless assailant than they did before; and Corvus, who has lately been flattered by some kindness from Mordax, is unmindful enough of Laniger's feeling to dwell on this instance of good-nature with admiring gratitude. There is a fable that when the badger had been stung all over by bees, a bear consoled him by a rhapsodic account of how he himself had just breakfasted on their honey. The badger replied peevishly, "The stings are in my flesh, and the sweetness is on your muzzle." The bear, it is said, was surprised at the badger's want of altruism.

But this difference of sensibility between Laniger and his friends only mirrors in a faint way the difference between his own point of view and that of the man who has injured him. If those neutral, perhaps even affectionate persons, form no lively conception of what Laniger suffers, how should Mordax have any such sympathetic

imagination to check him in what he persuades himself is a scourging administered by the qualified man to the unqualified? Depend upon it, his conscience, though active enough in some relations, has never given him a twinge because of his polemical rudeness and even brutality. He would go from the room where he has been tiring himself through the watches of the night in lifting and turning a sick friend, and straightway write a reply or rejoinder in which he mercilessly pilloried a Laniger who had supposed that he could tell the world something else or more than had been sanctioned by the eminent Mordax—and what was worse, had sometimes really done so. Does this nullify the genuineness of motive which made him tender to his suffering friend? Not at all. It only proves that his arrogant egoism, set on fire, sends up smoke and flame where just before there had been the dews of fellowship and pity. He is angry and equips himself accordingly—with a penknife to give the offender a *comprachico* countenance, a mirror to show him the effect, and a pair of nailed boots to give him his dismissal. All this to teach him who the Romans really were, and to purge inquiry of incompetent intrusion, so rendering an important service to mankind.

When a man is in a rage and wants to hurt another in consequence, he can always regard himself as the civil arm of a spiritual power, and all the more easily because there is real need to assert the righteous efficacy of indignation. I for my part feel with the Lanigers, and should object all the more to their or my being lacerated and dressed with salt, if the administrator of such torture alleged as a motive his care for truth and posterity, and got himself pictured with a halo in consequence. In transactions between fellow-men it is well to consider a little, in the first place, what is fair and kind toward the person immediately concerned, before we spit and roast him on behalf of the next century but one. Wide-reaching motives, blessed and glorious as they are, and of the highest sacramental virtue, have their dangers, like all else that touches the mixed life of the earth. They are archangels with awful brow and flaming sword, summoning and encouraging us to do the right and the divinely heroic, and we feel a beneficent tremor in their presence; but to learn what it is they thus summon us to do, we have to consider the mortals we are elbowing, who are of our own stature and our own appetites. I cannot feel sure how my voting will

affect the condition of Central Asia in the coming ages, but I have good reason to believe that the future populations there will be none the worse off because I abstain from conjectural villification of my opponents during the present parliamentary session, and I am very sure that I shall be less injurious to my contemporaries. On the whole, and in the vast majority of instances, the action by which we can do the best for future ages is of the sort which has a certain beneficence and grace for contemporaries. A sour father may reform prisons, but considered in his sourness he does harm. The deed of Judas has been attributed to far-reaching views, and the wish to hasten his Master's declaration of Himself as the Messiah. Perhaps—I will not maintain the contrary—Judas represented his motive in this way, and felt justified in his traitorous kiss; but my belief that he deserved, metaphorically speaking, to be where Dante saw him at the bottom of the Malebolge, would not be the less strong because he was not convinced that his action was detestable. I refuse to accept a man who has the stomach for such treachery, as a hero impatient for the redemption of mankind and for the beginning of a reign when the kisses shall be those of peace and righteousness.

All this is by the way, to show that my apology for Mordax was not founded on his persuasion of superiority in his own motives, but on the compatibility of unfair, equivocal, and even cruel actions with a nature which, apart from special temptations, is kindly and generous; and also to enforce the need of checks from a fellow-feeling with those whom our acts immediately (not distantly) concern. Will any one be so hardy as to maintain that an otherwise worthy man cannot be vain and arrogant? I think most of us have some interest in arguing the contrary. And it is of the nature of vanity and arrogance, if unchecked, to become cruel and self-justifying. There are fierce beasts within: chain them, chain them, and let them learn to cower before the creature with wider reason. This is what one wishes for Mordax—that his heart and brain should restrain the outleap of roar and talons.

As to his unwillingness to admit that an idea which he has not discovered is novel to him, one is surprised that quick intellect and shrewd observation do not early gather reasons for being ashamed of a mental trick which makes one among the comic parts of that various actor Conceited Ignorance.

I have a sort of valet and factotum, an excellent, respectable servant, whose spelling is so unvitiated by non-phonetic superfluities that he writes *night* as *nit*. One day, looking over his accounts, I said to him jocosely, "You are in the latest fashion with your spelling, Pummel: most people spell 'night' with a *gh* between the *i* and the *t*, but the greatest scholars now spell it as you do." "So I suppose, sir," says Pummel; "I've see it with a *gh*, but I've noways give into that myself."

You would never catch Pummel in an interjection of surprise. I have sometimes laid traps for his astonishment, but he has escaped them all, either by a respectful neutrality, as of one who would not appear to notice that his master had been taking too much wine, or else by that strong persuasion of his all-knowingness which makes it simply impossible for him to feel himself newly informed. If I tell him that the world is spinning round and along like a top, and that he is spinning with it, he says, "Yes, I've heard a deal of that in my time, sir," and lifts the horizontal lines of his brow a little higher, balancing his head from side to side as if it were too painfully full. Whether I tell him that they cook puppies in China, that there are ducks with fur coats in Australia, or that in some parts of the world it is the pink of politeness to put your tongue out on introduction to a respectable stranger, Pummel replies, "So I suppose, sir," with an air of resignation to hearing my poor version of well-known things, such as elders use in listening to lively boys lately presented with an anecdote book. His utmost concession is, that what you state is what he would have supplied if you had given him *carte blanche* instead of your needless instruction, and in this sense his favorite answer is, "I should say."

"Pummel," I observed, a little irritated at not getting my coffee, "if you were to carry your kettle and spirits of wine up a mountain of a morning, your water would boil there sooner." "I should say, sir." "Or, there are boiling springs in Iceland. Better go to Iceland." "That's what I've been thinking, sir."

I have taken to asking him hard questions, and as I expected, he never admits his own inability to answer them without representing it as common to the human race. "What is the cause of the tides, Pummel?" "Well, sir, nobody rightly knows. Many gives their opinion, but if I was to give mine, it 'ud be different."

But while he is never surprised himself, he is constantly imagining situations of surprise for others. His own consciousness is that of one so thoroughly soaked in knowledge that further absorption is impossible, but his neighbors appear to him to be in the state of thirsty sponges which it is a charity to besprinkle. His great interest in thinking of foreigners is that they must be surprised at what they see in England, and especially at the beef. He is often occupied with the surprise Adam must have felt at the sight of the assembled animals — "for he was not like us, sir, used from a b'y to Wombwell's shows." He is fond of discoursing to the lad who acts as shoe-black and general subaltern, and I have overheard him saying to that small upstart, with some severity, "Now don't you pretend to know, because the more you pretend the more I see your ignirance" — a lucidity on his part which has confirmed my impression that the thoroughly self-satisfied person is the only one fully to appreciate the charm of humility in others.

Your diffident, self-suspecting mortal is not very angry that others should feel more comfortable about themselves, provided they are not otherwise offensive: he is rather like the chilly person, glad to sit next a warmer neighbor; or the timid, glad to have a courageous fellow-traveler. It cheers him to observe the store of small comforts that his fellow-creatures may find in their self-complacency, just as one is pleased to see poor old souls soothed by the tobacco and snuff for which one has neither nose nor stomach oneself.

But your arrogant man will not tolerate a presumption which he sees to be ill-founded. The service he regards society as most in need of is to put down the conceit which is so particularly rife around him that he is inclined to believe it the growing characteristic of the present age. In the schools of Magna Græcia, or in the sixth century of our era, or even under Kublai Khan, he finds a comparative freedom from that presumption by which his contemporaries are stirring his able gall. The way people will now flaunt notions which are not his without appearing to mind that they are not his, strikes him as especially disgusting. It might seem surprising to us that one strongly convinced of his own value should prefer to exalt an age in which *he* did not flourish, if it were not for the reflection that the present age is the only one in which anybody has appeared to undervalue him.

IX.

A HALF-BREED.

An early deep-seated love to which we become faithless has its unfailing Nemesis, if only in that division of soul which narrows all newer joys by the intrusion of regret and the established presentiment of change. I refer not merely to the love of a person, but to the love of ideas, practical beliefs, and social habits. And faithlessness here means not a gradual conversion dependent on enlarged knowledge, but a yielding to seductive circumstance; not a conviction that the original choice was a mistake, but a subjection to incidents that flatter a growing desire. In this sort of love it is the forsaker who has the melancholy lot; for an abandoned belief may be more effectively vengeful than Dido. The child of a wandering tribe caught young and trained to polite life, if he feels an hereditary yearning can run away to the old wilds and get his nature into tune. But there is no such recovery possible to the man who remembers what he once believed without being convinced that he was in error, who feels within him unsatisfied stirrings toward old beloved habits and intimacies from which he has far receded without conscious justification or unwavering sense of superior attractiveness in the new. This involuntary renegade has his character hopelessly jangled and out of tune. He is like an organ with its stops in the lawless condition of obtruding themselves without method, so that hearers are amazed by the most unexpected transitions—the trumpet breaking in on the flute, and the oböe confounding both.

Hence the lot of Mixtus affects me pathetically, notwithstanding that he spends his growing wealth with liberality and manifest enjoyment. To most observers he appears to be simply one of the fortunate and also sharp commercial men who began with meaning to be rich, and have become what they meant to be: a man never taken to be well-born, but surprisingly better informed than the well-born usually are, and distinguished among ordinary commercial magnates by a personal kindness which prompts him not only to help the suffering in a material

way through his wealth, but also by direct ministration of his own; yet with all this, diffusing, as it were, the odor of a man delightedly conscious of his wealth as an equivalent for the other social distinctions of rank and intellect which he can thus admire without envying. Hardly one among those superficial observers can suspect that he aims or has ever aimed at being a writer; still less can they imagine that his mind is often moved by strong currents of regret and of the most unworldly sympathies from the memories of a youthful time when his chosen associates were men and women whose only distinction was a religious, a philanthropic, or an intellectual enthusiasm, when the lady on whose words his attention most hung was a writer of minor religious literature, when he was a visitor and exhorter of the poor in the alleys of a great provincial town, and when he attended the lectures given specially to young men by Mr. Apollos, the eloquent congregational preacher, who had studied in Germany and had liberal advanced views then far beyond the ordinary teaching of his sect. At that time Mixtus thought himself a young man of socially reforming ideas, of religious principles and religious yearnings. It was within his prospects also to be rich, but he looked forward to a use of his riches chiefly for reforming and religious purposes. His opinions were of a strongly democratic stamp, except that even then, belonging to the class of employers, he was opposed to all demands in the employed that would restrict the expansiveness of trade. He was the most democratic in relation to the unreasonable privileges of the aristocracy and landed interest; and he had also a religious sense of brotherhood with the poor. Altogether, he was a sincerely benevolent young man, interested in ideas, and renouncing personal ease for the sake of study, religious communion, and good works. If you had known him then you would have expected him to marry a highly serious and perhaps literary woman, sharing his benevolent and religious habits, and likely to encourage his studies—a woman who along with himself would play a distinguished part in one of the most enlightened religious circles of a great provincial capital.

How is it that Mixtus finds himself in a London mansion, and in society totally unlike that which made the ideal of his younger years? And whom *did* he marry?

Why, he married Scintilla, who fascinated him as she had fascinated others, by her prettiness, her liveliness, and her music. It is a common enough case—that of a man

being suddenly captivated by a woman nearly the opposite of his ideal; or if not wholly captivated, at least effectively captured by a combination of circumstances along with an unwarily manifested inclination which might otherwise have been transient. Mixtus was captivated and then captured on the worldly side of his disposition, which had been always growing and flourishing side by side with his philanthropic and religious tastes. He had ability in business, and he had early meant to be rich; also he was getting rich, and the taste for such success was naturally growing with the pleasure of rewarded exertion. It was during a business sojourn in London that he met Scintilla, who, though without fortune, associated with families of Greek merchants living in a style of splendor, and with artists patronized by such wealthy entertainers. Mixtus on this occasion became familiar with a world in which wealth seemed the key to a more brilliant sort of dominance than that of a religious patron in the provincial circles of X. Would it not be possible to unite the two kinds of sway? A man bent on the most useful ends might, *with a fortune large enough*, make morality magnificent, and recommend religious principle by showing it in combination with the best kind of house and the most liberal of tables; also with a wife whose graces, wit, and accomplishments gave a finish sometimes lacking even to establishments got up with that unhesitating worldliness to which high cost is a sufficient reason. Enough.

Mixtus married Scintilla. Now this lively lady knew nothing of Nonconformists, except that they were unfashionable; she did not quite distinguish one conventicle from another, and Mr. Apollos with his enlightened interpretations seemed to her as heavy a bore, even if not quite so ridiculous, as Mr. Johns could have been with his solemn twang at the Baptist chapel in the lowest suburbs, or as a local preacher among the Methodists. In general, people who appeared seriously to believe in any sort of doctrine, whether religious, social, or philosophical, seemed rather absurd to Scintilla. Ten to one these theoretic people pronounced oddly, had some reason or other for saying that the most agreeable things were wrong, wore objectionable clothes, and wanted you to subscribe to something. They were probably ignorant of art and music, did not understand *badinage*, and, in fact, could talk of nothing amusing. In Scintilla's eyes the majority of persons were ridiculous and deplorably wanting in that keen perception

of what was good taste, with which she herself was blessed by nature and education; but the people understood to be religious or otherwise theoretic, were the most ridiculous of all, without being proportionately amusing and invitable.

Did Mixtus not discover this view of Scintilla's before their marriage? Or did he allow her to remain in ignorance of habits and opinions which had made half the occupation of his youth?

When a man is inclined to marry a particular woman, and has made any committal of himself, this woman's opinions, however different from his own, are readily regarded as part of her pretty ways, especially if they are merely negative; as for example, that she does not insist on the Trinity or on the rightfulness or expediency of church rates, but simply regards her lover's troubling himself in disputation on these heads as stuff and nonsense. The man feels his own superior strength, and is sure that marriage will make no difference to him on the subjects about which he is in earnest. And to laugh at men's affairs is a woman's privilege, tending to enliven the domestic hearth. If Scintilla had no liking for the best sort of noncomformity, she was without any troublesome bias toward Episcopacy, Anglicanism, and early sacraments, and was quite contented not to go to church.

As to Scintilla's acquaintance with her lover's tastes on these subjects, she was equally convinced on her side that a husband's queer ways while he was a bachelor would be easily laughed out of him when he had married an adroit woman. Mixtus, she felt, was an excellent creature, quite likeable, who was getting rich; and Scintilla meant to have all the advantages of a rich man's wife. She was not in the least a wicked woman; she was simply a pretty animal of the ape kind, with an aptitude for certain accomplishments which education had made the most of.

But we have seen what has been the result to poor Mixtus. He has become richer even than he dreamed of being, has a little palace in London, and entertains with splendor the half-aristocratic, professional and artistic society which he is proud to think select. This society regards him as a clever fellow in his particular branch, seeing that he has become a considerable capitalist, and as a man desirable to have on the list of one's acquaintances. But from every other point of view Mixtus finds himself personally submerged: what he happens to think is not

felt by his esteemed guests to be of any consequence, and what he used to think with the ardor of conviction he now hardly ever expresses. He is transplanted, and the sap within him has long been diverted into other than the old lines of vigorous growth. How could he speak to the artist Crespi or to Sir Hong Kong Bantam about the enlarged doctrine of Mr. Apollos? How could he mention to them his former efforts toward evangelizing the inhabitants of the X. alleys? And his references to his historical and geographical studies toward a survey of possible markets for English products are received with an air of ironical suspicion by many of his political friends, who take his pretension to give advice concerning the Amazon, the Euphrates and the Niger, as equivalent to the currier's wide views on the applicability of leather. He can only make a figure through his genial hospitality. It is in vain that he buys the best pictures and statues of the best artists. Nobody will call him a judge in art. If his pictures and statues are well chosen, it is generally thought that Scintilla told him what to buy; and yet Scintilla in other connections is spoken of as having only a superficial and often questionable taste. Mixtus, it is decided, is a good fellow, not ignorant—no, really having a good deal of knowledge as well as sense, but not easy to classify otherwise than as a rich man. He has consequently become a little uncertain as to his own point of view, and in his most unreserved moments of friendly intercourse, even when speaking to listeners whom he thinks likely to sympathize with the earlier part of his career, he presents himself in all his various aspects and feels himself in turn what he has been, what he is, and what others take him to be (for this last status is what we must all more or less accept). He will recover with some glow of enthusiasm the vision of his old associates, the particular limit he was once accustomed to trace of freedom in religious speculation, and his old ideal of a worthy life; but he will presently pass to the argument that money is the only means by which you can get what is best worth having in the world, and will arrive at the exclamation, "Give me money!" with the tone and gesture of a man who both feels and knows. Then if one of his audience, not having money, remarks that a man may have made up his mind to do without money because he prefers something else, Mixtus is with him immediately, cordially concurring in the supreme value of the mind and genius, which indeed make

his own chief delight, in that he is able to entertain the admirable possessors of these attributes at his own table, though not himself reckoned among them. Yet, he will proceed to observe, there was a time when he sacrificed his sleep to study, and even now amid the press of business, he from time to time thinks of taking up the manuscripts which he hopes some day to complete, and is always increasing his collection of valuable works bearing on his favorite topics. And it is true that he has read much in certain directions, and can remember what he has read; he knows the history and theories of colonization and the social condition of countries that do not at present consume a sufficiently large share of our products and manufactures. He continues his early habit of regarding the spread of Christianity as a great result of our commercial intercourse with black, brown and yellow populations; but this is an idea not spoken of in the sort of fashionable society that Scintilla collects round her husband's table, and Mixtus now philosophically reflects that the cause must come before the effect, and that the thing to be directly striven for is the commercial intercourse, not excluding a little war if that also should prove needful as a pioneer of Christianity. He has long been wont to feel bashful about his former religion; as if it were an old attachment having consequences which he did not abandon, but kept in decent privacy, his avowed objects and actual position being incompatible with their public acknowledgment.

There is the same kind of fluctuation in his aspect toward social questions and duties. He has not lost the kindness that used to make him the benefactor and succorer of the needy, and he is still liberal in helping forward the clever and industrious; but in his active superintendence of commercial undertakings he has contracted more and more of the bitterness which capitalists and employers often feel to be a reasonable mood toward obstructive proletaries. Hence many who have occasionally met him when trade questions were being discussed, conclude him to be indistinguishable from the ordinary run of moneyed and money-getting men. Indeed, hardly any of his acquaintances know what Mixtus really is, considered as a whole—nor does Mixtus himself know it.

X.

DEBASING THE MORAL CURRENCY.

"Il ne faut pas mettre un ridicule où il n'y en a point: c'est se gâter le goût, c'est corrompre son jugement et celui des autres. Mais le ridicule qui est quelque part, il faut l'y voir, l'en tirer avec grâce et d'une manière qui plaise et qui instruise."

I am fond of quoting this passage from La Bruyère, because the subject is one where I like to show a Frenchman on my side, to save my sentiments from being set down to my peculiar dullness and deficient sense of the ludicrous, and also that they may profit by that enhancement of ideas when presented in a foreign tongue, that glamor of unfamiliarity conferring a dignity on the foreign names of very common things, of which even a philosopher like Dugald Stewart confesses the influence. I remember hearing a fervid woman attempt to recite in English the narrative of a begging Frenchman who described the violent death of his father in the July days. The narrative had impressed her, through the mists of her flushed anxiety to understand it, as something quite grandly pathetic; but finding the facts turn out meagre, and her audience cold, she broke off saying, "It sounded so much finer in French—*j'ai vu le sang de mon pére*, and so on—I wish I could repeat it in French." This was a pardonable illusion in an old-fashioned lady who had not received the polyglot education of the present day; but I observe that even now much nonsense and bad taste win admiring acceptance solely by virtue of the French language, and one may fairly desire that what seems a just discrimination should profit by the fashionable prejudice in favor of La Bruyère's idiom. But I wish he had added that the habit of dragging the ludicrous into topics where the chief interest is of a different or even opposite kind is a sign not of endowment, but of deficiency. The art of spoiling is within reach of the dullest faculty: the coarsest clown with a hammer in his hand might chip the nose off every statue and bust in the Vatican, and stand grinning at the effect of his work. Because wit is an exquisite product

of high powers, we are not therefore forced to admit the sadly confused inference of the monotonous jester that he is establishing his superiority over every less facetious person, and over every topic on which he is ignorant or insensible, by being uneasy until he has distorted it in the small cracked mirror which he carries about with him as a joking apparatus. Some high authority is needed to give many worthy and timid persons the freedom of muscular repose under the growing demand on them to laugh when they have no other reason than the peril of being taken for dullards; still more to inspire them with the courage to say that they object to the theatrical spoiling for themselves and their children of all affecting themes, all the grander deeds and aims of men, by burlesque associations adapted to the taste of rich fishmongers in the stalls and their assistants in the gallery. The English people in the present generation are falsely reputed to know Shakespere (as, by some innocent persons, the Florentine mule-drivers are believed to know the *Divina Commedia*, not, perhaps, excluding all the subtle discourses in the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*); but there seems a clear prospect that in the coming generation he will be known to them through burlesques, and that his plays will find a new life as pantomimes. A bottle-nosed Lear will come on with a monstrous corpulence from which he will frantically dance himself free during the midnight storm; Rosalind and Celia will join in a grotesque ballet with shepherds and shepherdesses; Ophelia in fleshings and a voluminous brevity of grenadine will dance through the mad scene, finishing with the famous "attitude of the scissors" in the arms of Laertes; and all the speeches in "Hamlet" will be so ingeniously parodied that the originals will be reduced to a mere *memoria technica* of the improver's puns — premonitory signs of a hideous millenium, in which the lion will have to lie down with the lascivious monkeys whom (if we may trust Pliny) his soul naturally abhors.

I have been amazed to find that some artists whose own works have the ideal stamp, are quite insensible to the damaging tendency of the burlesquing spirit which ranges to and fro and up and down on the earth, seeing no reason (except a precarious censorship) why it should not appropriate every sacred, heroic, and pathetic theme which serves to make up the treasure of human admiration, hope, and love. One would have thought that their own half-despairing efforts to invest in worthy outward shape

the vague inward impressions of sublimity, and the consciousness of an implicit ideal in the commonest scenes, might have made them susceptible of some disgust or alarm at a species of burlesque which is likely to render their compositions no better than a dissolving view, where every noble form is seen melting into its preposterous caricature. It used to be imagined of the unhappy mediæval Jews that they parodied Calvary by crucifying dogs; if they had been guilty they would at least have had the excuse of the hatred and rage begotten by persecution. Are we on the way to a parody which shall have no other excuse than the reckless search after fodder for degraded appetites—after the pay to be earned by pasturing Circe's herd where they may defile every monument of that growing life which should have kept them human?

The world seems to me well supplied with what is genuinely ridiculous: wit and humor may play as harmlessly or beneficently round the changing facets of egoism, absurdity, and vice, as the sunshine over the rippling sea or the dewy meadows. Why should we make our delicious sense of the ludicrous, with its invigorating shocks of laughter and its irrepressible smiles which are the outglow of an inward radiation as gentle and cheering as the warmth of morning, flourish like a brigand on the robbery of our mental wealth?—or let it take its exercise as a madman might, if allowed a free nightly promenade, by drawing the populace with bonfires which leave some venerable structure a blackened ruin or send a scorching smoke across the portraits of the past, at which we once looked with a loving recognition of fellowship, and disfigure them into butts of mockery?—nay, worse—use it to degrade the healthy appetites and affections of our nature as they are seen to be degraded in insane patients whose system, all out of joint, finds matter for screaming laughter in mere topsy-turvy, makes every passion preposterous or obscene, and turns the hard-won order of life into a second chaos hideous enough to make one wail that the first was ever thrilled with light?

This is what I call debasing the moral currency: lowering the value of every inspiring fact and tradition so that it will command less and less of the spiritual products, the generous motives which sustain the charm and elevation of our social existence—the something besides bread by which man saves his soul alive. The bread-winner of the family may demand more and more coppery shillings, or

assignats, or greenbacks for his day's work, and so get the needful quantum of food; but let that moral currency be emptied of its value—let a greedy buffoonery debase all historic beauty, majesty, and pathos, and the more you heap up the desecrated symbols the greater will be the lack of the ennobling emotions which subdue the tyranny of suffering, and make ambition one with social virtue.

And yet, it seems, parents will put into the hands of their children ridiculous parodies (perhaps with more ridiculous "illustrations") of the poems which stirred their own tenderness or filial piety, and carry them to make their first acquaintance with great men, great works, or solemn crises through the medium of some miscellaneous burlesque which, with its idiotic puns and farcical attitudes, will remain among their primary associations, and reduce them throughout their time of studious preparation for life to the moral imbecility of an inward giggle at what might have stimulated their high emulation or fed the fountains of compassion, trust, and constancy. One wonders where these parents have deposited that stock of morally educating stimuli which is to be independent of poetic tradition, and to subsist in spite of the finest images being degraded and the finest words of genius being poisoned as with some befooling drug.

Will fine wit, will exquisite humor prosper the more through this turning of all things indiscriminately into food for a gluttonous laughter, an idle craving without sense of flavors? On the contrary. That delightful power which La Bruyère points to—"le ridicule qui est quelque part, il faut l'y voir, l'en tirer avec grâce et d'une manière qui plaise et qui instruise"—depends on a discrimination only compatible with the varied sensibilities which give sympathetic insight, and with the justice of perception which is another name for grave knowledge. Such a result is no more to be expected from faculties on the strain to find some small hook by which they may attach the lowest incongruity to the most momentous subject than it is to be expected of a sharper, watching for gulls in a great political assemblage, that he will notice the blundering logic of partisan speakers, or season his observation with the salt of historical parallels. But after all our psychological teaching, and in the midst of our zeal for education, we are still, most of us, at the stage of believing that mental powers and habits have somehow, not perhaps in the general statement, but in any particular case, a kind

of spiritual glaze against conditions which we are continually applying to them. We soak our children in habits of contempt and exultant gibing, and yet are confident that—as Clarissa one day said to me—"We can always teach them to be reverent in the right place, you know." And doubtless if she were to take her boys to see a burlesque Socrates, with swollen legs, dying in the utterance of cockney puns, and were to hang up a sketch of this comic scene among their bedroom prints, she would think this preparation not at all to the prejudice of their emotions on hearing their tutor read that narrative of the *Apology* which has been consecrated by the reverent gratitude of ages. This is the impoverishment that threatens our posterity:—a new Famine, a meagre fiend with lewd grin and clumsy hoof, is breathing a moral mildew over the harvest of our human sentiments. These are the most delicate elements of our too easily perishable civilization. And here again I like to quote a French testimony. Sainte Beuve, referring to a time of insurrectionary disturbance, says: "Rien de plus prompt à baisser que la civilisation dans des crises comme celle-ci; on perd en trois semaines le résultat de plusieurs siècles. La civilisation, la *vie* est une chose apprise et inventée, qu'on le sache bien: *'Inventas aut qui vitam excoluere per artes.'* Les hommes après quelques années de paix oublient trop cette verité: ils arrivent à croire que la *culture* est chose innée, qu'elle est la même chose que la *nature*. La sauvagerie est toujours là à deux pas, et, dès qu'on lâche pied, elle recommence." We have been severely enough taught (if we were willing to learn) that our civilization, considered as a splendid material fabric, is helplessly in peril without the spiritual police of sentiments or ideal feelings. And it is this invisible police which we had need, as a community, strive to maintain in efficient force. How if a dangerous "Swing" were sometimes disguised in a versatile entertainer devoted to the amusement of mixed audiences? And I confess that sometimes when I see a certain style of young lady, who checks our tender admiration with rouge and henna and all the blazonry of an extravagant expenditure, with slang and bold *brusquerie* intended to signify her emancipated view of things, and with cynical mockery which she mistakes for penetration, I am sorely tempted to hiss out *"Pétroleuse!"* It is a small matter to have our palaces set aflame compared with the misery of having our sense of a noble womanhood, which is the inspiration

of a purifying shame, the promise of life-penetrating affection, stained and blotted out by images of repulsiveness. These things come—not of higher education, but—of dull ignorance fostered into pertness by the greedy vulgarity which reverses Peter's visionary lesson and learns to call all things common and unclean. It comes of debasing the moral currency.

The Tirynthians, according to an ancient story reported by Athenæus, becoming conscious that their trick of laughter at everything and nothing was making them unfit for the conduct of serious affairs, appealed to the Delphic oracle for some means of cure. The god prescribed a peculiar form of sacrifice, which would be effective if they could carry it through without laughing. They did their best; but the flimsy joke of a boy upset their unaccustomed gravity, and in this way the oracle taught them that even the gods could not prescribe a quick cure for a long vitiation, or give power and dignity to a people who in a crisis of the public well-being were at the mercy of a poor jest.

XI.

THE WASP CREDITED WITH THE HONEYCOMB.

No man, I imagine, would object more strongly than Euphorion to communistic principles in relation to material property, but with regard to property in ideas he entertains such principles willingly, and is disposed to treat the distinction between Mine and Thine in original authorship as egoistic, narrowing, and low. I have known him, indeed, insist at some expense of erudition on the prior right of an ancient, a mediæval, or an eighteenth century writer to be credited with a view or statement lately advanced with some show of originality; and this championship seems to imply a nicety of conscience toward the dead. He is evidently unwilling that his neighbors should get more credit than is due to them, and in this way he appears to recognize a certain proprietorship even in spiritual production. But perhaps it is no real inconsistency that, with regard to many instances of modern origination, it is his habit to talk with a Gallic largeness and refer to the universe: he expatiates on the diffusive nature of intellectual products, free and all embracing as the liberal air; on the infinitesimal smallness of individual origination compared with the massive inheritance of thought on which every new generation enters; on that growing preparation for every epoch through which certain ideas or modes of view are said to be in the air, and still more metaphorically speaking, to be inevitably absorbed, so that every one may be excused for not knowing how he got them. Above all, he insists on the proper subordination of the irritable self, the mere vehicle of an idea or combination which, being produced by the sum total of the human race, must belong to that multiple entity, from the accomplished lecturer or popularizer who transmits it, to the remotest generation of Fuegians or Hottentots, however indifferent these may be to the superiority of their right above that of the eminently perishable dyspeptic author.

One may admit that such considerations carry a pro-

found truth to be even religiously contemplated, and yet object all the more to the mode in which Euphorion seems to apply them. I protest against the use of these majestic conceptions to do the dirty work of unscrupulosity and justify the non-payment of conscious debts which cannot be defined or enforced by the law. Especially since it is observable that the large views as to intellectual property which can apparently reconcile an able person to the use of lately borrowed ideas as if they were his own, when this spoliation is favored by the public darkness, never hinder him from joining in the zealous tribute of recognition and applause to those warriors of Truth whose triumphal arches are seen in the public ways, those conquerors whose battles and "annexations" even the carpenters and bricklayers know by name. Surely the acknowledgment of a mental debt which will not be immediately detected, and may never be asserted, is a case to which the traditional susceptibility to "debts of honor" would be suitably transferred. There is no massive public opinion that can be expected to tell on these relations of thinkers and investigators—relations to be thoroughly understood and felt only by those who are interested in the life of ideas and acquainted with their history. To lay false claim to an invention or discovery which has an immediate market value; to vamp up a professedly new book of reference by stealing from the pages of one already produced at the cost of much labor and material; to copy somebody else's poem and send the manuscript to a magazine, or hand it about among friends as an original "effusion"; to deliver an elegant extract from a known writer as a piece of improvised eloquence:—these are the limits within which the dishonest pretense of originality is likely to get hissed or hooted and bring more or less shame on the culprit. It is not necessary to understand the merit of a performance, or even to spell with any comfortable confidence, in order to perceive at once that such pretenses are not respectable. But the difference between these vulgar frauds, these devices of ridiculous jays whose ill-secured plumes are seen falling off them as they run, and the quiet appropriation of other people's philosophic or scientific ideas, can hardly be held to lie in their moral quality unless we take impunity as our criterion. The pitiable jays had no presumption in their favor and foolishly fronted an alert incredulity; but Euphorion, the accomplished theorist, has an audience who expect much of him, and take it as

the most natural thing in the world that every unusual view which he presents anonymously should be due solely to his ingenuity. His borrowings are no incongruous feathers awkwardly stuck on; they have an appropriateness which makes them seem an answer to anticipation, like the return phrases of a melody. Certainly one cannot help the ignorant conclusions of polite society, and there are perhaps fashionable persons who, if a speaker has occasion to explain what the occiput is, will consider that he has lately discovered that curiously named portion of the animal frame: one cannot give a genealogical introduction to every long-stored item of fact or conjecture that may happen to be a revelation for the large class of persons who are understood to judge soundly on a small basis of knowledge. But Euphorion would be very sorry to have it supposed that he is unacquainted with the history of ideas, and sometimes carries even into minutiæ the evidence of his exact registration of names in connection with quotable phrases or suggestions: I can therefore only explain the apparent infirmity of his memory in cases of larger "conveyance" by supposing that he is accustomed by the very association of largeness to range them at once under those grand laws of the universe in the light of which Mine and Thine disappear and are resolved into Everybody's or Nobody's, and one man's particular obligations to another melt untraceably into the obligations of the earth to the solar system in general.

Euphorion himself, if a particular omission of acknowledgment were brought home to him, would probably take a narrower ground of explanation. It was a lapse of memory; or it did not occur to him as necessary in this case to mention a name, the source being well known—or (since this seems usually to act as a strong reason for mention) he rather abstained from adducing the name because it might injure the excellent matter advanced, just as an obscure trade-mark casts discredit on a good commodity, and even on the retailer who has furnished himself from a quarter not likely to be esteemed first-rate. No doubt this last is a genuine and frequent reason for the non-acknowledgment of indebtedness to what one may call impersonal as well as personal sources: even an American editor of school classics, whose own English could not pass for more than a syntactical shoddy of the cheapest sort, felt it unfavorable to his reputation for sound learning that he should be obliged to the Penny Cyclopædia, and disguised

his references to it under contractions in which *Us. Knowl.* took the place of the low word *Penny*. Works of this convenient stamp, easily obtained and well nourished with matter, are felt to be like rich but unfashionable relations who are visited and received in privacy, and whose capital is used or inherited without any ostentatious insistence on their names and places of abode. As to memory, it is known that this frail faculty naturally lets drop the facts which are less flattering to our self-love—when it does not retain them carefully as subjects not to be approached, marshy spots with a warning flag over them. But it is always interesting to bring forward eminent names, such as Patricius or Scaliger, Euler or Lagrange, Bopp or Humboldt. To know exactly what has been drawn from them is erudition and heightens our own influence, which seems advantageous to mankind; whereas to cite an author whose ideas may pass as higher currency under our own signature can have no object except the contradictory one of throwing the illumination over his figure when it is important to be seen oneself. All these reasons must weigh considerably with those speculative persons who have to ask themselves whether or not Universal Utilitarianism requires that in the particular instance before them they should injure a man who has been of service to them, and rob a fellow-workman of the credit which is due to him.

After all, however, it must be admitted that hardly any accusation is more difficult to prove, and more liable to be false, than that of a plagiarism which is the conscious theft of ideas and deliberate reproduction of them as original. The arguments on the side of acquittal are obvious and strong:—the inevitable coincidences of contemporary thinking; and our continual experience of finding notions turning up in our minds without any label on them to tell us whence they came, so that if we are in the habit of expecting much from our own capacity we accept them at once as a new inspiration. Then, in relation to the elder authors, there is the difficulty first of learning and then of remembering exactly what has been wrought into the backward tapestry of the world's history, together with the fact that ideas acquired long ago reappear as the sequence of an awakened interest or a line of inquiry which is really new in us, whence it is conceivable that if we were ancients some of us might be offering grateful hecatombs by mistake, and proving our honesty in a ruinously expensive manner. On the other hand, the

evidence on which plagiarism is concluded is often of a kind which, though much trusted in questions of erudition and historical criticism, is apt to lead us injuriously astray in our daily judgments, especially of the resentful, condemnatory sort. How Pythagoras came by his ideas, whether St. Paul was acquainted with all the Greek poets, what Tacitus must have known by hearsay and systematically ignored, are points on which a false persuasion of knowledge is less damaging to justice and charity than an erroneous confidence, supported by reasoning fundamentally similar, of my neighbor's blameworthy behavior in a case where I am personally concerned. No premises require closer scrutiny than those which lead to the constantly echoed conclusion, "He must have known," or "He must have read." I marvel that this facility of belief on the side of knowledge can subsist under the daily demonstration that the easiest of all things to the human mind is *not* to know and *not* to read. To praise, to blame, to shout, grin, or hiss, where others shout, grin, or hiss — these are native tendencies; but to know and to read are artificial, hard accomplishments, concerning which the only safe supposition is, that as little of them has been done as the case admits. An author, keenly conscious of having written, can hardly help imagining his condition of lively interest to be shared by others, just as we are all apt to suppose that the chill or heat we are conscious of must be general, or even to think that our sons and daughters, our pet schemes, and our quarreling correspondence, are themes to which intelligent persons will listen long without weariness. But if the ardent author happen to be alive to practical teaching he will soon learn to divide the larger part of the enlightened public into those who have not read him and think it necessary to tell him so when they meet him in polite society, and those who have equally abstained from reading him, but wish to conceal this negation, and speak of his "incomparable works" with that trust in testimony which always has its cheering side.

Hence it is worse than foolish to entertain silent suspicions of plagiarism, still more to give them voice when they are founded on a construction of probabilities which a little more attention to everyday occurrences as a guide in reasoning would show us to be really worthless, considered as proof. The length to which one man's memory can go in letting drop associations that are vital to another

can hardly find a limit. It is not to be supposed that a person desirous to make an agreeable impression on you would deliberately choose to insist to you, with some rhetorical sharpness, on an argument which you were the first to elaborate in public; yet any one who listens may overhear such instances of obliviousness. You naturally remember your peculiar connection with your acquaintance's judicious views; but why should *he?* Your fatherhood, which is an intense feeling to you, is only an additional fact of meagre interest for him to remember; and a sense of obligation to the particular living fellow-struggler who has helped us in our thinking, is not yet a form of memory the want of which is felt to be disgraceful or derogatory, unless it is taken to be a want of polite instruction, or causes the missing of a cockade on the day of celebration. In our suspicions of plagiarism, we must recognize as the first weighty probability, that what we who feel injured remember best is precisely what is least likely to enter lastingly into the memory of our neighbors. But it is fair to maintain that the neighbor who borrows your property, loses it for awhile, and when it turns up again forgets your connection with it and counts it his own, shows himself so much the feebler in grasp and rectitude of mind. Some absent persons cannot remember the state of wear in their own hats and umbrellas, and have no mental check to tell them that they have carried home a fellow-visitor's more recent purchase: they may be excellent householders, far removed from the suspicion of low devices, but one wishes them a more correct perception, and a more wary sense that a neighbor's umbrella may be newer than their own.

True, some persons are so constituted that the very excellence of an idea seems to them a convincing reason that it must be, if not solely, yet especially theirs. It fits in so beautifully with their general wisdom, it lies implicitly in so many of their manifested opinions, that if they have not yet expressed it (because of preoccupation) it is clearly a part of their indigenous produce, and is proved by their immediate eloquent promulgation of it to belong more naturally and appropriately to them than to the person who seemed first to have alighted on it, and who sinks in their all-originating consciousness to that low kind of entity, a second cause. This is not lunacy, nor pretense, but a genuine state of mind very effective in practice and often carrying the public with it, so that the

poor Columbus is found to be a very faulty adventurer, and the continent is named after Amerigo. Lighter examples of this instinctive appropriation are constantly met with among brilliant talkers. Aquila is too agreeable and amusing for any one who is not himself bent on display to be angry at his conversational rapine—his habit of darting down on every morsel of booty that other birds may hold in their beaks, with an innocent air as if it were all intended for his use and honestly counted on by him as a tribute in kind. Hardly any man, I imagine, can have had less trouble in gathering a showy stock of information than Aquila. On close inquiry you would probably find that he had not read one epoch-making book of modern times, for he has a career which obliges him to much correspondence and other official work, and he is too fond of being in company to spend his leisure moments in study; but to his quick eye, ear, and tongue, a few predatory excursions in conversation where there are instructed persons gradually furnish surprisingly clever modes of statement and allusion on the dominant topic. When he first adopts a subject he necessarily falls into mistakes, and it is interesting to watch his progress into fuller information and better nourished irony, without his ever needing to admit that he has made a blunder or to appear conscious of correction. Suppose, for example, he had incautiously founded some ingenious remarks on a hasty reckoning that nine thirteens made a hundred and two, and the insignificant Bantam, hitherto silent, seemed to spoil the flow of ideas by stating that the product could not be taken as less than a hundred and seventeen, Aquila would glide on in the most graceful manner from a repetition of his previous remark to the continuation—"All this is on the supposition that a hundred and two were all that could be got out of nine thirteens; but as all the world knows that nine thirteens will yield," etc.—proceeding straightway into a new train of ingenious consequences, and causing Bantam to be regarded by all present as one of those slow persons who take irony for ignorance, and who would warn the weasel to keep awake. How should a small-eyed, feebly crowing mortal like him be quicker in arithmetic than the keen-faced, forcible Aquila, in whom universal knowledge is easily credible? Looked into closely, the conclusion from a man's profile, voice, and fluency to his certainty in multiplication beyond the twelves, seems to show a confused notion of the way in

which very common things are connected; but it is on such false correlations that men found half their inferences about each other, and high places of trust may sometimes be held on no better foundation.

It is a commonplace that words, writings, measures, and performances in general, have qualities assigned them not by a direct judgment on the performances themselves, but by a presumption of what they are likely to be, considering who is the performer. We all notice in our neighbors this reference to names as guides in criticism, and all furnish illustrations of it in our own practice; for check ourselves as we will, the first impression from any sort of work must depend on a previous attitude of mind, and this will constantly be determined by the influences of a name. But that our prior confidence or want of confidence in given names is made up of judgments just as hollow as the consequent praise or blame they are taken to warrant, is less commonly perceived, though there is a conspicuous indication of it in the surprise or disappointment often manifested in the disclosure of an authorship about which everybody has been making wrong guesses. No doubt if it had been discovered who wrote the "Vestiges," many an ingenious structure of probabilities would have been spoiled, and some disgust might have been felt for a real author who made comparatively so shabby an appearance of likelihood. It is this foolish trust in prepossessions, founded on spurious evidence, which makes a medium of encouragement for those who, happening to have the ear of the public, give other people's ideas the advantage of appearing under their own well-received name, while any remonstrance from the real producer becomes an unwelcome disturbance of complacency with each person who has paid complimentary tributes in the wrong place.

Hardly any kind of false reasoning is more ludicrous than this on the probabilities of origination. It would be amusing to catechise the guessers as to their exact reasons for thinking their guess "likely"; why Hoopoe of John's has fixed on Toucan of Magdalen; why Shrike attributes its peculiar style to Buzzard, who has not hitherto been known as a writer; why the fair Columba thinks it must belong to the reverend Merula; and why they are all alike disturbed in their previous judgment of its value by finding that it really came from Skunk, whom they had either not thought of at all, or thought of as belonging to

a species excluded by the nature of the case. Clearly they were all wrong in their notions of the specific conditions, which lay unexpectedly in the small Skunk, and in him alone—in spite of his education nobody knows where, in spite of somebody's knowing his uncles and cousins, and in spite of nobody's knowing that he was cleverer than they thought him.

Such guesses remind one of a fabulist's imaginary council of animals assembled to consider what sort of creature had constructed a honeycomb found and much tasted by Bruin and other epicures. The speakers all started from the probability that the maker was a bird, because this was the quarter from which a wondrous nest might be expected; for the animals at that time, knowing little of their own history, would have rejected as inconceivable the notion that a nest could be made by a fish; and as to the insects, they were not willingly received in society and their ways were little known. Several complimentary presumptions were expressed that the honeycomb was due to one or the other admired and popular bird, and there was much fluttering on the part of the Nightingale and Swallow, neither of whom gave a positive denial, their confusion perhaps extending to their sense of identity; but the Owl hissed at this folly, arguing from his particular knowledge that the animal which produced honey must be the Musk-rat, the wondrous nature of whose secretions required no proof; and, in the powerful logical procedure of the Owl, from musk to honey was but a step. Some disturbance arose hereupon, for the Musk-rat began to make himself obtrusive, believing in the Owl's opinion of his powers, and feeling that he could have produced the honey if he had thought of it; until an experimental Butcher-Bird proposed to anatomise him as a help to decision. The hubbub increased, the opponents of the Musk-rat inquiring who his ancestors were; until a diversion was created by an able discourse of the Macaw on structures generally, which he classified so as to include the honeycomb, entering into so much admirable exposition that there was a prevalent sense of the honeycomb having probably been produced by one who understood it so well. But Bruin, who had probably eaten too much to listen with edification, grumbled in his low kind of language, that "Fine words butter no parsnips," by which he meant to say that there was no new honey forthcoming.

Perhaps the audience generally was beginning to tire,

when the Fox entered with his snout dreadfully swollen, and reported that the beneficent originator in question was the Wasp, which he had found much smeared with undoubted honey, having applied his nose to it—whence indeed the able insect, perhaps justifiably irritated at what might seem a sign of skepticism, had stung him with some severity, an infliction Reynard could hardly regret, since the swelling of a snout normally so delicate would corroborate his statement and satisfy the assembly that he had really found the honey-creating genius.

The Fox's admitted acuteness, combined with the visible swelling, were taken as undeniable evidence, and the revelation undoubtedly met a general desire for information on a point of interest. Nevertheless, there was a murmur the reverse of delighted, and the feelings of some eminent animals were too strong for them: the Orang-outang's jaw dropped so as seriously to impair the vigor of his expression, the edifying Pelican screamed and flapped her wings, the Owl hissed again, the Macaw became loudly incoherent, and the Gibbon gave his hysterical laugh; while the Hyæna, after indulging in a more splenetic guffaw, agitated the question whether it would not be better to hush up the whole affair, instead of giving public recognition to an insect whose produce, it was now plain, had been much over-estimated. But this narrow-spirited motion was negatived by the sweet-toothed majority. A complimentary deputation to the Wasp was resolved on, and there was a confident hope that this diplomatic measure would tell on the production of honey.

XII.

"SO YOUNG."

GANYMEDE was once a girlishly handsome precocious youth. That one cannot for any considerable number of years go on being youthful, girlishly handsome, and precocious, seems on consideration to be a statement as worthy of credit as the famous syllogistic conclusion, "Socrates was mortal." But many circumstances have conspired to keep up in Ganymede the illusion that he is surprisingly young. He was the last born of his family, and from his earliest memory was accustomed to be commended as such to the care of his elder brothers and sisters: he heard his mother speak of him as her youngest darling with a loving pathos in her tone, which naturally suffused his own view of himself, and gave him the habitual consciousness of being at once very young and very interesting. Then, the disclosure of his tender years was a constant matter of astonishment to strangers who had had proof of his precocious talents, and the astonishment extended to what is called the world at large when he produced "A Comparative Estimate of European Nations" before he was well out of his teens. All comers, on a first interview, told him that he was marvelously young, and some repeated the statement each time they saw him; all critics who wrote about him called attention to the same ground for wonder: his deficiencies and excesses were alike to be accounted for by the flattering fact of his youth, and his youth was the golden background which set off his many hued endowments. Here was already enough to establish a strong association between his sense of identity and his sense of being unusually young. But after this he devised and founded an ingenious organization for consolidating the literary interests of all the four continents (subsequently including Australasia and Polynesia), he himself presiding in the central office, which thus became a new theatre for the constantly repeated situation of an astonished stranger in the presence of a boldly scheming administrator found to be remarkably young. If we imagine with due charity

the effect on Ganymede, we shall think it greatly to his credit that he continued to feel the necessity of being something more than young, and did not sink by rapid degrees into a parallel of that melancholy object, a superannuated youthful phenomenon. Happily he had enough of valid, active faculty to save him from that tragic fate. He had not exhausted his fountain of eloquent opinion in his "Comparative Estimate," so as to feel himself like some other juvenile celebrities, the sad survivor of his own manifest destiny, or like one who has risen too early in the morning, and finds all the solid day turned into a fatigued afternoon. He has continued to be productive both of schemes and writings, being perhaps helped by the fact that his "Comparative Estimate" did not greatly affect the currents of European thought, and left him with the stimulating hope that he had not done his best, but might yet produce what would make his youth more surprising than ever.

I saw something of him through his Antinoüs period, the time of rich chestnut locks, parted not by a visible white line, but by a shadowed furrow from which they fell in massive ripples to right and left. In these slim days he looked the younger for being rather below the middle size, and though at last one perceived him contracting an indefinable air of self-consciousness, a slight exaggeration of the facial movements, the attitudes, the little tricks, and the romance in shirt-collars, which must be expected from one who, in spite of his knowledge, was so exceedingly young, it was impossible to say that he was making any great mistake about himself. He was only undergoing one form of a common moral disease: being strongly mirrored for himself in the remark of others, he was getting to see his real characteristics as a dramatic part, a type to which his doings were always in correspondence. Owing to my absence on travel and to other causes I had lost sight of him for several years, but such a separation between two who have not missed each other seems in this busy century only a pleasant reason, when they happen to meet again in some old accustomed haunt, for the one who has stayed at home to be more communicative about himself than he can well be to those who have all along been in his neighborhood. He had married in the interval, and as if to keep up his surprising youthfulness in all relations, he had taken a wife considerably older than himself. It would probably have seemed to him a

disturbing inversion of the natural order that any one very near to him should have been younger than he, except his own children who, however young, would not necessarily hinder the normal surprise at the youthfulness of their father. And if my glance had revealed my impression on first seeing him again, he might have received a rather disagreeable shock, which was far from my intention. My mind, having retained a very exact image of his former appearance, took note of unmistakable changes such as a painter would certainly not have made by way of flattering his subject. He had lost his slimness, and that curved solidity which might have adorned a taller man was a rather sarcastic threat to his short figure. The English branch of the Teutonic race does not produce many fat youths, and I have even heard an American lady say that she was much "disappointed" at the moderate number and size of our fat men, considering their reputation in the United States; hence a stranger would now have been apt to remark that Ganymede was unusually plump for a distinguished writer, rather than unusually young. But how was he to know this? Many long-standing prepossessions are as hard to be corrected as a long-standing mispronunciation, against which the direct experience of eye and ear is often powerless. And I could perceive that Ganymede's inwrought sense of his surprising youthfulness had been stronger than the superficial reckoning of his years and the merely optical phenomena of the looking-glass. He now held a post under Government, and not only saw, like most subordinate functionaries, how ill everything was managed, but also what were the changes that a high constructive ability would dictate; and in mentioning to me his own speeches and other efforts toward propagating reformatory views in his department, he concluded by changing his tone to a sentimental head voice and saying—

"But I am so young; people object to any prominence on my part; I can only get myself heard anonymously, and when some attention has been drawn the name is sure to creep out. The writer is known to be young, and things are none the forwarder."

"Well," said I, "youth seems the only drawback that is sure to diminish. You and I have seven years less of it than when we last met."

"Ah?" returned Ganymede, as lightly as possible, at the same time casting an observant glance over me, as if

he were marking the effect of seven years on a person who had probably begun life with an old look, and even as an infant had given his countenance to that significant doctrine, the transmigration of ancient souls into modern bodies.

I left him on that occasion without any melancholy forecast that his illusion would be suddenly or painfully broken up. I saw that he was well victualed and defended against a ten years' siege from ruthless facts; and in the course of time observation convinced me that his resistance received considerable aid from without. Each of his written productions, as it came out, was still commented on as the work of a very young man. One critic, finding that he wanted solidity, charitably referred to his youth as an excuse. Another, dazzled by his brilliancy, seemed to regard his youth as so wondrous that all other authors appeared decrepit by comparison, and their style such as might be looked for from gentlemen of the old school. Able pens (according to a familiar metaphor) appeared to shake their heads good-humoredly, implying that Ganymede's crudities were pardonable in one so exceedingly young. Such unanimity amid diversity, which a distant posterity might take for evidence that on the point of age at least there could have been no mistake, was not really more difficult to account for than the prevalence of cotton in our fabrics. Ganymede had been first introduced into the writing world as remarkably young, and it was no exceptional consequence that the first deposit of information about him held its ground against facts which, however open to observation, were not necessarily thought of. It is not so easy, with our rates and taxes and need for economy in all directions, to cast away an epithet or remark that turns up cheaply, and to go in expensive search after more genuine substitutes. There is high Homeric precedent for keeping fast hold of an epithet under all changes of circumstance, and so the precocious author of the "Comparative Estimate" heard the echoes repeating "Young Ganymede" when an illiterate beholder at a railway station would have given him forty years at least. Besides, important elders, sachems of the clubs and public meetings, had a genuine opinion of him as young enough to be checked for speech on subjects which they had spoken mistakenly about when he was in his cradle; and then, the midway parting of his crisp hair, not common among English committee-men, formed a presumption against the

ripeness of his judgment which nothing but a speedy baldness could have removed.

It is but fair to mention all these outward confirmations of Ganymede's illusion, which shows no signs of leaving him. It is true that he no longer hears expressions of surprise at his youthfulness, on a first introduction to an admiring reader; but this sort of external evidence has become an unnecessary crutch to his habitual inward persuasion. His manners, his costume, his suppositions of the impression he makes on others, have all their former correspondence with the dramatic part of the young genius. As to the incongruity of his contour and other little accidents of *physique*, he is probably no more aware that they will affect others as incongruities than Armida is conscious how much her rouge provokes our notice of her wrinkles, and causes us to mention sarcastically that motherly age which we should otherwise regard with affectionate reverence.

But let us be just enough to admit that there may be old-young coxcombs as well as old-young coquettes.

XIII.

HOW WE COME TO GIVE OURSELVES FALSE TESTIMONIALS, AND BELIEVE IN THEM.

It is my way when I observe any instance of folly, any queer habit, any absurd allusion, straightway to look for something of the same type in myself, feeling sure that amid all differences there will be a certain correspondence; just as there is more or less correspondence in the natural history even of continents widely apart, and of islands in opposite zones. No doubt men's minds differ in what we may call their climate or share of solar energy, and a feeling or tendency which is comparable to a panther in one may have no more imposing aspect than that of a weasel in another: some are like a tropical habitat in which the very ferns cast a mighty shadow, and the grasses are a dry ocean in which a hunter may be submerged: others like the chilly latitudes in which your forest-tree, fit elsewhere to prop a mine, is a pretty miniature suitable for fancy potting. The eccentric man might be typified by the Australian fauna, refuting half our judicious assumptions of what nature allows. Still, whether fate commanded us to thatch our persons among the Esquimaux or to choose the latest thing in tattooing among the Polynesian isles, our precious guide Comparison would teach us in the first place by likeness, and our clue to further knowledge would be resemblance to what we already know. Hence, having a keen interest in the natural history of my inward self, I pursue this plan I have mentioned of using my observation as a clue or lantern by which I detect small herbage or lurking life; or I take my neighbor in his least becoming tricks or efforts as an opportunity for luminous deduction concerning the figure the human genus makes in the specimen which I myself furnish.

Introspection which starts with the purpose of finding out one's own absurdities is not likely to be very mischievous, yet of course it is not free from dangers any more than breathing is, or the other functions that keep us alive and active. To judge of others by oneself is in its most innocent meaning the briefest expression for our only method

of knowing mankind; yet, we perceive, it has come to mean in many cases either the vulgar mistake which reduces every man's value to the very low figure at which the valuer himself happens to stand; or else, the amiable illusion of the higher nature misled by a too generous construction of the lower. One cannot give a recipe for wise judgment: it resembles appropriate muscular action, which is attained by the myriad lessons in nicety of balance and of aim that only practice can give. The danger of the inverse procedure, judging of self by what one observes in others, if it is carried on with much impartiality and keenness of discernment, is that it has a laming effect, enfeebling the energies of indignation and scorn, which are the proper scourges of wrong-doing and meanness, and which should continually feed the wholesome restraining power of public opinion. I respect the horsewhip when applied to the back of Cruelty, and think that he who applies it is a more perfect human being because his outleap of indignation is not checked by a too curious reflection on the nature of guilt—a more perfect human being because he more completely incorporates the best social life of the race, which can never be constituted by ideas that nullify action. This is the essence of Dante's sentiment (it is painful to think that he applies it very cruelly)—

"E cortesia fù, lui esser villano"*

and it is undeniable that a too intense consciousness of one's kinship with all frailties and vices undermines the active heroism which battles against wrong.

But certainly nature has taken care that this danger should not at present be very threatening. One could not fairly describe the generality of one's neighbors as too lucidly aware of manifesting in their own persons the weaknesses which they observe in the rest of her Majesty's subjects; on the contrary, a hasty conclusion as to schemes of Providence might lead to the supposition that one man was intended to correct another by being most intolerant of the ugly quality or trick which he himself possesses. Doubtless philosophers will be able to explain how it must necessarily be so, but pending the full extension of the *à priori* method, which will show that only blockheads could expect anything to be otherwise, it does seem surprising that Heloisa should be disgusted at Laura's

*Inferno, xxxiii, 150.

attempts to disguise her age, attempts which she recognizes so thoroughly because they enter into her own practice; that Semper, who often responds at public dinners and proposes resolutions on platforms, though he has a trying gestation of every speech and a bad time for himself and others at every delivery, should yet remark pitilessly on the folly of precisely the same course of action in Ubique; that Aliquis, who lets no attack on himself pass unnoticed, and for every handful of gravel against his windows sends a stone in reply, should deplore the ill-advised retorts of Quispiam, who does not perceive that to show oneself angry with an adversary is to gratify him. To be unaware of our own little tricks of manner or our own mental blemishes and excesses is a comprehensible unconsciousness: the puzzling fact is that people should apparently take no account of their deliberate actions, and should expect them to be equally ignored by others. It is an inversion of the accepted order: *there* it is the phrases that are official and the conduct or privately manifested sentiment that is taken to be real; *here* it seems that the practice is taken to be official and entirely nullified by the verbal representation which contradicts it. The thief making a vow to heaven of full restitution and whispering some reservations, expecting to cheat Omniscience by an "aside," is hardly more ludicrous than the many ladies and gentlemen who have more belief, and expect others to have it, in their own statement about their habitual doings than in the contradictory fact which is patent in the daylight. One reason of the absurdity is that we are led by a tradition about ourselves, so that long after a man has practically departed from a rule or principle, he continues innocently to state it as a true description of his practice—just as he has a long tradition that he is not an old gentleman, and is startled when he is seventy at overhearing himself called by an epithet which he has only applied to others.

"A person with your tendency of constitution should take as little sugar as possible," said Pilulus to Bovis somewhere in the darker decades of this century. It has made a great difference to Avis since he took my advice in that matter: he used to consume half a pound a day."

"God bless me!" cries Bovis. "I take very little sugar myself."

"Twenty-six large lumps every day of your life, Mr. Bovis," says his wife.

"No such thing!" exclaims Bovis.

"You drop them into your tea, coffee, and whisky yourself, my dear, and I count them."

"Nonsense!" laughs Bovis, turning to Pilulus, that they may exchange a glance of mutual amusement at a woman's inaccuracy.

But she happened to be right. Bovis had never said inwardly that he would take a large allowance of sugar, and he had the tradition about himself that he was a man of the most moderate habits; hence, with this conviction, he was naturally disgusted at the saccharine excesses of Avis.

I have sometimes thought that this facility of men in believing that they are still what they once meant to be—this undisturbed appropriation of a traditional character which is often but a melancholy relic of early resolutions, like the worn and soiled testimonial to soberness and honesty carried in the pocket of a tippler whom the need of a dram has driven into peculation—may sometimes diminish the turpitude of what seems a flat, barefaced falsehood. It is notorious that a man may go on uttering false assertions about his own acts till he at last believes in them: is it not possible that sometimes in the very first utterance there may be a shade of creed-reciting belief, a reproduction of a traditional self which is clung to against all evidence? There is no knowing all the disguises of the lying serpent.

When we come to examine in detail what is the sane mind in the sane body, the final test of completeness seems to be a security of distinction between what we have professed and what we have done; what we have aimed at at and what we have achieved; what we have invented and what we have witnessed or had evidenced to us; what we think and feel in the present and what we thought and felt in the past.

I know that there is a common prejudice which regards the habitual confusion of *now* and *then*, of *it was* and *it is*, of *it seemed so* and *I should like it to be so*, as a mark of high imaginative endowment, while the power of precise statement and description is rated lower, as the attitude of an everyday prosaic mind. High imagination is often assigned or claimed as if it were a ready activity in fabricating extravagances such as are presented by fevered dreams, or as if its possessors were in that state of inability to give credible testimony which would warrant their

exclusion from the class of acceptable witnesses in a court of justice; so that a creative genius might fairly be subjected to the disability which some laws have stamped on dicers, slaves, and other classes whose position was held perverting to their sense of social responsibility.

This endowment of mental confusion is often boasted of by persons whose imaginativeness would not otherwise be known, unless it were by the slow process of detecting that their descriptions and narratives were not to be trusted. Callista is always ready to testify of herself that she is an imaginative person, and sometimes adds in illustration that if she had taken a walk and seen an old heap of stones on her way, the account she would give on returning would include many pleasing particulars of her own invention, transforming the simple heap into an interesting castellated ruin. This creative freedom is all very well in the right place, but before I can grant it to be a sign of unusual mental power, I must inquire whether, on being requested to give a precise description of what she saw, she would be able to cast aside her arbitrary combinations and recover the objects she really perceived so as to make them recognizable by another person who passed the same way. Otherwise her glorifying imagination is not an addition to the fundamental power of strong, discerning perception, but a cheaper substitute. And, in fact, I find on listening to Callista's conversation, that she has a very lax conception even of common objects, and an equally lax memory of events. It seems of no consequence to her whether she shall say that a stone is overgrown with moss or with lichen, that a building is of sandstone or of granite, that Melibœus once forgot to put on his cravat or that he always appears without it; that everybody says so, or that one stockbroker's wife said so yesterday; that Philemon praised Euphemia up to the skies, or that he denied knowing any particular evil of her. She is one of those respectable witnesses who would testify to the exact moment of an apparition, because any desirable moment will be as exact as another to her remembrance; or who would be the most worthy to witness the action of spirits on slates and tables because the action of limbs would not probably arrest her attention. She would describe the surprising phenomena exhibited by the powerful medium with the same freedom that she vaunted in relation to the old heap of stones. Her supposed imaginativeness is simply a very usual lack of discriminating perception, accompanied with a less

usual activity of misrepresentation, which, if it had been a little more intense, or had been stimulated by circumstance, might have made her a profuse writer unchecked by the troublesome need of veracity.

These characteristics are the very opposite of such as yield a fine imagination, which is always based on a keen vision, a keen consciousness of what *is*, and carries the store of definite knowledge as material for the construction of its inward visions. Witness Dante, who is at once the most precise and homely in his reproduction of actual objects, and the most soaringly at large in his imaginative combinations. On a much lower level we distinguish the hyperbole and rapid development in descriptions of persons and events which are lit up by humorous intention in the speaker—we distinguish this charming play of intelligence which resembles musical improvisation on a given motive, where the farthest sweep of curve is looped into relevancy by an instinctive method, from the florid inaccuracy or helpless exaggeration which is really something commoner than the correct simplicity often depreciated as prosaic.

Even if high imagination were to be identified with illusion, there would be the same sort of difference between the imperial wealth of illusion which is informed by industrious submissive observation and the trumpery stage-property illusion which depends on the ill-defined impressions gathered by capricious inclination, as there is between a good and a bad picture of the Last Judgment. In both these the subject is a combination never actually witnessed, and in the good picture the general combination may be of surpassing boldness; but on examination it is seen that the separate elements have been closely studied from real objects. And even where we find the charm of ideal elevation with wrong drawing and fantastic color, the charm is dependent on the selective sensibility of the painter to certain real delicacies of form which confer the expression he longed to render; for apart from this basis of an effect perceived in common, there could be no conveyance of æsthetic meaning by the painter to the beholder. In this sense it is as true to say of Fra Angelico's Coronation of the Virgin, that it has a strain of reality, as to say so of a portrait by Rembrandt, which also has its strain of ideal elevation due to Rembrandt's virile selective sensibility.

To correct such self-flatterers as Callista, it is worth repeating that powerful imagination is not false outward vision, but intense inward representation, and a creative

energy constantly fed by susceptibility to the veriest minutiæ of experience, which it reproduces and constructs in fresh and fresh wholes; not the habitual confusion of provable fact with the fictions of fancy and transient inclination, but a breadth of ideal association which informs every material object, every incidental fact with far-reaching memories and stored residues of passion, bringing into new light the less obvious relations of human existence. The illusion to which it is liable is not that of habitually taking duckponds for lilied pools, but of being more or less transiently and in varying degrees so absorbed in ideal vision as to lose the consciousness of surrounding objects or occurrences; and when that rapt condition is past, the sane genius discriminates clearly between what has been given in this parenthetic state of excitement, and what he has known, and may count on, in the ordinary world of experience. Dante seems to have expressed these conditions perfectly in that passage of the *Purgatorio* where, after a triple vision which has made him forget his surroundings, he says—

> "Quando l'anima mia tornò di fuori
> Alle cose che son fuor di lei vere,
> Io riconobbi i miei non falsi errori."—(c. xv.)

He distinguishes the ideal truth of his entranced vision from the series of external facts to which his consciousness had returned. Isaiah gives us the date of his vision in the Temple—"the year that King Uzziah died"—and if afterward the mighty-winged seraphim were present with him as he trod the street, he doubtless knew them for images of memory, and did not cry "Look!" to the passers-by.

Certainly the seer, whether prophet, philosopher, scientific discoverer, or poet, may happen to be rather mad: his powers may have been used up, like Don Quixote's, in their visionary or theoretic constructions, so that the reports of common-sense fail to affect him, or the continuous strain of excitement may have robbed his mind of its elasticity. It is hard for our frail mortality to carry the burden of greatness with steady gait and full alacrity of perception. But he is the strongest seer who can support the stress of creative energy and yet keep that sanity of expectation which consists in distinguishing, as Dante does, between the *cose che son vere* outside the individual mind, and the *non falsi errori* which are the revelations of true imaginative power.

XIV.

THE TOO READY WRITER.

One who talks too much, hindering the rest of the company from taking their turn, and apparently seeing no reason why they should not rather desire to know his opinion or experience in relation to all subjects, or at least to renounce the discussion of any topic where he can make no figure, has never been praised for this industrious monopoly of work which others would willingly have shared in. However various and brilliant his talk may be, we suspect him of impoverishing us by excluding the contributions of other minds, which attract our curiosity the more because he has shut them up in silence. Besides, we get tired of a "manner" in conversation as in painting, when one theme after another is treated with the same lines and touches. I begin with a liking for an estimable master, but by the time he has stretched his interpretation of the world unbrokenly along a palatial gallery, I have had what the cautious Scotch mind would call "enough" of him. There is monotony and narrowness already to spare in my own identity; what comes to me from without should be larger and more impartial than the judgment of any single interpreter. On this ground even a modest person, without power or will to shine in the conversation, may easily find the predominating talker a nuisance, while those who are full of matter on special topics are continually detecting miserably thin places in the web of that information which he will not desist from imparting. Nobody that I know of ever proposed a testimonial to a man for thus volunteering the whole expense of the conversation.

Why is there a different standard of judgment with regard to a writer who plays much the same part in literature as the excessive talker plays in what is traditionally called conversation? The busy Adrastus, whose professional engagements might seem more than enough for the nervous energy of one man, and who yet finds time to print essays on the chief current subjects, from the trilingual inscriptions, or the Idea of the Infinite among the prehistoric Lapps, to the Colorado beetle and the grape disease in the south of France, is generally praised if not

admired for the breadth of his mental range and his gigantic powers of work. Poor Theron, who has some original ideas on a subject to which he has given years of research and meditation, has been waiting anxiously from month to month to see whether his condensed exposition will find a place in the next advertised programme, but sees it, on the contrary, regularly excluded, and twice the space he asked for filled with the copious brew of Adrastus, whose name carries custom like a celebrated trade-mark. Why should the eager haste to tell what he thinks on the shortest notice, as if his opinion were a needed preliminary to discussion, get a man the reputation of being a conceited bore in conversation, when nobody blames the same tendency if it shows itself in print? The excessive talker can only be in one gathering at a time, and there is the comfort of thinking that everywhere else other fellow-citizens who have something to say may get a chance of delivering themselves; but the exorbitant writer can occupy space and spread over it the more or less agreeable flavor of his mind in four "mediums" at once, and on subjects taken from the four winds. Such restless and versatile occupants of literary space and time should have lived earlier when the world wanted summaries of all extant knowledge, and this knowledge being small, there was the more room for commentary and conjecture. They might have played the part of an Isidor of Seville or a Vincent of Beauvais brilliantly, and the willingness to write everything themselves would have been strictly in place. In the present day, the busy retailer of other people's knowledge which he has spoiled in the handling, the restless guesser and commentator, the importunate hawker of undesirable superfluities, the everlasting word-compeller who rises early in the morning to praise what the world has already glorified, or makes himself haggard at night in writing out his dissent from what nobody ever believed, is not simply "gratis anhelans, multa agendo nihil agens"—he is an obstruction. Like an incompetent architect with too much interest at his back, he obtrudes his ill-considered work where place ought to have been left to better men.

Is it out of the question that we should entertain some scruple about mixing our own flavor, as of the too cheap and insistent nutmeg, with that of every great writer and every great subject?—especially when our flavor is all we have to give, the matter or knowledge having been already

given by somebody else. What if we were only like the Spanish wine-skins which impress the innocent stranger with the notion that the Spanish grape has naturally a taste of leather? One could wish that even the greatest minds should leave some themes unhandled, or at least leave us no more than a paragraph or two on them to show how well they did in not being more lengthy.

Such entertainment of scruple can hardly be expected from the young; but happily their readiness to mirror the universe anew for the rest of mankind is not encouraged by easy publicity. In the vivacious Pepin I have often seen the image of my early youth, when it seemed to me astonishing that the philosophers had left so many difficulties unsolved, and that so many great themes had raised no great poet to treat them. I had an elated sense that I should find my brain full of theoretic clues when I looked for them, and that wherever a poet had not done what I expected, it was for want of my insight. Not knowing what had been said about the play of Romeo and Juliet, I felt myself capable of writing something original on its blemishes and beauties. In relation to all subjects I had a joyous consciousness of that ability which is prior to knowledge, and of only needing to apply myself in order to master any task—to conciliate philosophers whose systems were at present but dimly known to me, to estimate foreign poets whom I had not yet read, to show up mistakes in an historical monograph that roused my interest in an epoch which I had been hitherto ignorant of, when I should once have had time to verify my views of probability by looking into an encyclopædia. So Pepin; save only that he is industrious while I was idle. Like the astronomer in Rasselas, I swayed the universe in my consciousness without making any difference outside me; whereas Pepin, while feeling himself powerful with the stars in their courses, really raises some dust here below. He is no longer in his spring-tide, but having been always busy he has been obliged to use his first impressions as if they were deliberate opinions, and to range himself on the corresponding side in ignorance of much that he commits himself to; so that he retains some characteristics of a comparatively tender age, and among them a certain surprise that there have not been more persons equal to himself. Perhaps it is unfortunate for him that he early gained a hearing, or at least a place in print, and was thus encouraged in acquiring a fixed habit of writing, to the

exclusion of any other bread-winning pursuit. He is already to be classed as a "general writer," corresponding to the comprehensive wants of the "general reader," and with this industry on his hands it is not enough for him to keep up the ingenuous self-reliance of youth: he finds himself under an obligation to be skilled in various methods of seeming to know; and having habitually expressed himself before he was convinced, his interest in all subjects is chiefly to ascertain that he has not made a mistake, and to feel his infallibility confirmed. That impulse to decide, that vague sense of being able to achieve the unattempted, that dream of aerial unlimited movement at will without feet or wings, which were once but the joyous mounting of young sap, are already taking shape as unalterable woody fibre: the impulse has hardened into "style," and into a pattern of peremptory sentences; the sense of ability in the presence of other men's failures is turning into the official arrogance of one who habitually issues directions which he has never himself been called on to execute; the dreamy buoyancy of the stripling has taken on a fatal sort of reality in written pretensions which carry consequences. He is on the way to become like the loud-buzzing, bouncing Bombus who combines conceited illusions enough to supply several patients in a lunatic asylum with the freedom to show himself at large in various forms of print. If one who takes himself for the telegraphic centre of all American wires is to be confined as unfit to transact affairs, what shall we say to the man who believes himself in possession of the unexpressed motives and designs dwelling in the breasts of all sovereigns and all politicians? And I grieve to think that poor Pepin, though less political, may by-and-by manifest a persuasion hardly more sane, for he is beginning to explain people's writing by what he does not know about them. Yet he was once at the comparatively innocent stage which I have confessed to be that of my own early astonishment at my powerful originality; and copying the just humility of the old Puritan, I may say, "But for the grace of discouragement, this coxcombry might have been mine."

Pepin made for himself a necessity of writing (and getting printed) before he had considered whether he had the knowledge or belief that would furnish eligible matter. At first perhaps the necessity galled him a little, but it is now as easily borne, nay, is as irrepressible a habit as the

outpouring of inconsiderate talk. He is gradually being condemned to have no genuine impressions, no direct consciousness of enjoyment or the reverse from the quality of what is before him: his perceptions are continually arranging themselves in forms suitable to a printed judgment, and hence they will often turn out to be as much to the purpose if they are written without any direct contemplation of the object, and are guided by a few external conditions which serve to classify it for him. In this way he is irrevocably losing the faculty of accurate mental vision: having bound himself to express judgments which will satisfy some other demands than that of veracity, he has blunted his perceptions by continual preoccupation. We cannot command veracity at will: the power of seeing and reporting truly is a form of health that has to be delicately guarded, and as an ancient Rabbi has solemnly said, "The penalty of untruth is untruth." But Pepin is only a mild example of the fact that incessant writing with a view to printing carries internal consequences which have often the nature of disease. And however unpractical it may be held to consider whether we have anything to print which it is good for the world to read, or which has not been better said before, it will perhaps be allowed to be worth considering what effect the printing may have on ourselves. Clearly there is a sort of writing which helps to keep the writer in a ridiculously contented ignorance; raising in him continually the sense of having delivered himself effectively, so that the acquirement of more thorough knowledge seems as superfluous as the purchase of a costume for a past occasion. He has invested his vanity (perhaps his hope of income) in his own shallownesses and mistakes, and must desire their prosperity. Like the professional prophet, he learns to be glad of the harm that keeps up his credit, and to be sorry for the good that contradicts him. It is hard enough for any of us, amid the changing winds of fortune and the hurly-burly of events, to keep quite clear of a gladness which is another's calamity; but one may choose not to enter on a course which will turn such gladness into a fixed habit of mind, committing ourselves to be continually pleased that others should appear to be wrong in order that we may have the air of being right.

In some cases, perhaps, it might be urged that Pepin has remained the more self-contented because he has *not* written everything he believed himself capable of. He

once asked me to read a sort of programme of the species of romance which he should think it worth while to write—a species which he contrasted in strong terms with the productions of illustrious but overrated authors in this branch. Pepin's romance was to present the splendors of the Roman Empire at the culmination of its grandeur, when decadence was spiritually but not visibly imminent; it was to show the workings of human passion in the most pregnant and exalted of human circumstances, the designs of statesmen, the interfusion of philosophies, the rural relaxation and converse of immortal poets, the majestic triumphs of warriors, the mingling of the quaint and sublime in religious ceremony, the gorgeous delirium of gladiatorial shows, and under all the secretly working leaven of Christianity. Such a romance would not call the attention of society to the dialect of stable boys, the low habits of rustics, the vulgarity of small schoolmasters, the manners of men in livery, or to any other form of uneducated talk and sentiments; its characters would have virtues and vices alike on the grand scale, and would express themselves in an English representing the discourse of the most powerful minds in the best Latin, or possibly Greek, when there occurred a scene with a Greek philosopher on a visit to Rome or resident there as a teacher. In this way Pepin would do in fiction what had never been done before; something not at all like "Rienzi" or "Notre Dame de Paris," or any other attempt of that kind; but something at once more penetrating and more magnificent, more passionate and more philosophical, more panoramic yet more select; something that would present a conception of a gigantic period; in short, something truly Roman and world-historical.

When Pepin gave me this programme to read he was much younger than at present. Some slight success in another vein diverted him from the production of panoramic and select romance, and the experience of not having tried to carry out his programme has naturally made him more biting and sarcastic on the failures of those who have actually written romances without apparently having had a glimpse of a conception equal to his. Indeed, I am often comparing his rather touchingly inflated *naïveté*, as of a small young person walking on tiptoe while he is talking of elevated things, at the time when he felt himself the author of that unwritten romance, with his present epigrammatic curtness and affectation of power

kept strictly in reserve. His paragraphs now seem to have a bitter smile in them, from the consciousness of a mind too penetrating to accept any other man's ideas, and too equally competent in all directions to seclude his power in any one form of creation, but rather fitted to hang over them all as a lamp of guidance to the stumblers below. You perceive how proud he is of not being indebted to any writer; even with the dead he is on the creditor's side for he is doing them the service of letting the world know what they meant better than those poor pre-Pepinians themselves had any means of doing, and he treats the mighty shades very cavalierly.

Is this fellow-citizen of ours, considered simply in the light of a baptized Christian and tax-paying Englishman, really as madly conceited, as empty of reverential feeling, as unveracious and careless of justice, as full of catch-penny devices and stagey attitudinizing as on examination his writing shows itself to be? By no means. He has arrived at his present pass in "the literary calling" through the self-imposed obligation to give himself a manner which would convey the impression of superior knowledge and ability. He is much worthier and more admirable than his written productions, because the moral aspects exhibited in his writing are felt to be ridiculous or disgraceful in the personal relations of life. In blaming Pepin's writing we are accusing th epublic conscience, which is so lax and ill informed on the momentous bearings of authorship that it sanctions the total absence of scruple in undertaking and prosecuting what should be the best warranted of vocations.

Hence I still accept friendly relations with Pepin, for he has much private amiability, and though he probably thinks of me as a man of slender talents, without rapidity of *coup d'œil* and with no compensatory penetration, he meets me very cordially, and would not, I am sure, willingly pain me in conversation by crudely declaring his low estimate of my capacity. Yet I have often known him to insult my betters and contribute (perhaps unreflectingly) to encourage injurious conceptions of them — but that was done in the course of his professional writing, and the public conscience still leaves such writing nearly on the level of the Merry-Andrew's dress, which permits an impudent deportment and extraordinary gambols to one who in his ordinary clothing shows himself the decent father of a family.

XV.

DISEASES OF SMALL AUTHORSHIP.

PARTICULAR callings, it is known, encourage particular diseases. There is a painter's colic: the Sheffield grinder falls a victim to the inhalation of steel dust: clergymen so often have a certain kind of sore throat that this otherwise secular ailment gets named after them. And perhaps, if we were to inquire, we should find a similar relation between certain moral ailments and these various occupations, though here in the case of clergymen there would be specific differences: the poor curate, equally with the rector, is liable to clergyman's sore throat, but he would probably be found free from the chronic moral ailments encouraged by the possession of glebe and those higher chances of preferment which follow on having a good position already. On the other hand, the poor curate might have severe attacks of calculating expectancy concerning parishioners' turkeys, cheeses, and fat geese, or of uneasy rivalry for the donations of clerical charities.

Authors are so miscellaneous a class that their personified diseases, physical and moral, might include the whole procession of human disorders, led by dyspepsia and ending in madness—the awful Dumb Show of a world-historic tragedy. Take a large enough area of human life and all comedy melts into tragedy, like the Fool's part by the side of Lear. The chief scenes get filled with erring heroes, guileful usurpers, persecuted discoverers, dying deliverers: everywhere the protagonist has a part pregnant with doom. The comedy sinks to an accessory, and if there are loud laughs they seem a convulsive transition from sobs; or if the comedy is touched with a gentle lovingness, the panoramic scene is one where

> "Sadness is a kind of mirth
> So mingled as if mirth did make us sad
> And sadness merry.*

But I did not set out on the wide survey that would carry me into tragedy, and in fact had nothing more serious in my mind than certain small chronic ailments that come of

* Two Noble Kinsmen.

small authorship. I was thinking principally of Vorticella, who flourished in my youth not only as a portly lady walking in silk attire, but also as the authoress of a book entitled "The Channel Islands, with Notes and an Appendix." I would by no means make it a reproach to her that she wrote no more than one book; on the contrary, her stopping there seems to me a laudable example. What one would have wished, after experience, was that she had refrained from producing even that single volume, and thus from giving her self-importance a troublesome kind of double incorporation which became oppressive to her acquaintances, and set up in herself one of those slight chronic forms of disease to which I have just referred. She lived in the considerable provincial town of Pumpiter, which had its own newspaper press, with the usual divisions of political partizanship and the usual varieties of literary criticism—the florid and allusive, the *staccato* and peremptory, the clairvoyant and prophetic, the safe and pattern-phrased, or what one might call "the many-a-long-day style."

Vorticella, being the wife of an important townsman, had naturally the satisfaction of seeing "The Channel Islands" reviewed by all the organs of Pumpiter opinion, and their articles or paragraphs held as naturally the opening pages in the elegantly-bound album prepared by her for the reception of "critical opinions." This ornamental volume lay on a special table in her drawing-room close to the still more gorgeously-bound work of which it was the significant effect, and every guest was allowed the privilege of reading what had been said of the authoress and her work in the "Pumpiter Gazette and Literary Watchman," the "Pumpshire Post," the "Church Clock," the "Independent Monitor," and the lively but judicious publication known as the "Medley Pie"; to be followed up, if he chose, by the instructive perusal of the strikingly confirmatory judgment, sometimes concurrent in the very phrases, of journals from the most distant counties; as the "Latchgate Argus," the "Penllwy Universe," the "Cockalcekie Advertiser," the "Goodwin Sands Opinion," and the "Land's End Times."

I had friends in Pumpiter, and occasionally paid a long visit there. When I called on Vorticella, who had a cousinship with my hosts, she had to excuse herself because a message claimed her attention for eight or ten minutes, and, handing me the album of critical opinions,

said, with a certain emphasis which, considering my youth, was highly complimentary, that she would really like me to read what I should find there. This seemed a permissive politeness which I could not feel to be an oppression, and I ran my eyes over the dozen pages, each with a strip or islet of newspaper in the centre, with that freedom of mind (in my case meaning freedom to forget) which would be a perilous way of preparing for examination. This *ad libitum* perusal had its interest for me. The private truth being that I had not read "The Channel Islands," I was amazed at the variety of matter which the volume must contain to have impressed these different judges with the writer's surpassing capacity to handle almost all branches of inquiry and all forms of presentation. In Jersey she had shown herself an historian, in Guernsey a poetess, in Alderney a political economist, and in Sark a humorist: there were sketches of character scattered though the pages which might put our "fictionists" to the blush; the style was eloquent and racy, studded with gems of felicitous remark; and the moral spirit throughout was so superior that, said one, "the recording angel" (who is not supposed to take account of literature as such) "would assuredly set down the work as a deed of religion." The force of this eulogy on the part of several reviewers was much heightened by the incidental evidence of their fastidious and severe taste, which seemed to suffer considerably from the imperfections of our chief writers, even the dead and canonized: one afflicted them with the smell of oil, another lacked erudition and attempted (though vainly) to dazzle them with trivial conceits, one wanted to be more philosophical than nature had made him, another in attempting to be comic produced the melancholy effect of a half-starved Merry-Andrew; while one and all, from the author of the "Areopagitica" downward, had faults of style which must have made an able hand in the "Latchgate Argus" shake the many-glanced head belonging thereto with a smile of compassionate disapproval. Not so the authoress of "The Channel Islands": Vorticella and Shakespeare were allowed to be faultless. I gathered that no blemishes were observable in the work of this accomplished writer, and the repeated information that she was "second to none" seemed after this superfluous. Her thick octavo—notes, appendix and all—was unflagging from beginning to end; and the "Land's End Times," using a rather dangerous rhetorical figure, recommended

you not to take up the volume unless you had leisure to finish it at a sitting. It had given one writer more pleasure than he had had for many a long day—a sentence which had a melancholy resonance, suggesting a life of studious languor such as all previous achievements of the human mind failed to stimulate into enjoyment. I think the collection of critical opinions wound up with this sentence, and I had turned back to look at the lithographed sketch of the authoress which fronted the first page of the album, when the fair original re-entered and I laid down the volume on its appropriate table.

"Well, what do you think of them?" said Vorticella, with an emphasis which had some significance unperceived by me. "I know you are a great student. Give me *your* opinion of these opinions."

"They must be very gratifying to you," I answered with a little confusion, for I perceived that I might easily mistake my footing, and I began to have a presentiment of an examination for which I was by no means crammed.

"On the whole—yes," said Vorticella, in a tone of concession. "A few of the notices are written with some pains, but not one of them has really grappled with the chief idea in the appendix. I don't know whether you have studied political economy, but you saw what I said on page 398 about the Jersey fisheries?"

I bowed—I confess it—with the mean hope that this movement in the nape of my neck would be taken as sufficient proof that I had read, marked and learned. I do not forgive myself for this pantomimic falsehood, but I was young and morally timorous, and Vorticella's personality had an effect on me something like that of a powerful mesmeriser when he directs all his ten fingers toward your eyes, as unpleasantly visible ducts for the invisible stream. I felt a great power of contempt in her, if I did not come up to her expectations.

"Well," she resumed, "you observe that not one of them has taken up that argument. But I hope I convinced you about the drag-nets?"

Here was a judgment on me. Orientally speaking, I had lifted up my foot on the steep descent of falsity and was compelled to set it down on a lower level. "I should think you must be right," said I, inwardly resolving that on the next topic I would tell the truth.

"I *know* that I am right," said Vorticella. "The fact is that no critic in this town is fit to meddle with such

subjects, unless it be Volvox, and he, with all his command of language, is very superficial. It is Volvox who writes in the 'Monitor.' I hope you noticed how he contradicts himself?"

My resolution, helped by the equivalence of dangers, stoutly prevailed, and I said "No."

"No! I am surprised. He is the only one who finds fault with me. He is a Dissenter, you know. The 'Monitor' is the Dissenters' organ, but my husband has been so useful to them in municipal affairs that they would not venture to run my book down; they feel obliged to tell the truth about me. Still Volvox betrays himself. After praising me for my penetration and accuracy, he presently says I have allowed myself to be imposed upon and have let my active imagination run away with me. That is like his dissenting impertinence. Active my imagination may be, but I have it under control. Little Vibrio, who writes the playful notice in the 'Medley Pie,' has a clever hit at Volvox in that passage about the steeplechase of imagination, where the loser wants to make it appear that the winner was only run away with. But if you did not notice Volvox's self-contradiction you would not see the point," added Vorticella, with rather a chilling intonation. "Or perhaps you did not read the 'Medley Pie' notice? That is a pity. Do take up the book again. Vibrio is a poor little tippling creature but, as Mr. Carlyle would say, he has an eye, and he is always lively."

I did take up the book again and read as demanded.

"It is very ingenius," said I, really appreciating the difficulty of being lively in this connection: it seemed even more wonderful than that a Vibrio should have an eye.

"You are probably surprised to see no notices from the London press," said Vorticella. "I have one—a very remarkable one. But I reserve it until the others have spoken, and then I shall introduce it to wind up. I shall have them reprinted, of course, and inserted in future copies. This from the 'Candelabrum' is only eight lines in length, but full of venom. It calls my style dull and pompous. I think that will tell its own tale, placed after the other critiques."

"People's impressions are so different," said I. "Some persons find 'Don Quixote' dull."

"Yes," said Vorticella, in emphatic chest tones, "dullness is a matter of opinion; but pompous! That I never was and never could be. Perhaps he means that my mat-

ter is too important for his taste; and I have no objection to *that*. I did not intend to be trivial. I should just like to read you that passage about the drag-nets, because I could make it clearer to you."

A second (less ornamental) copy was at her elbow and was already opened, when, to my great relief, another guest was announced, and I was able to take my leave without seeming to run away from "The Channel Islands," though not without being compelled to carry with me the loan of "the marked copy," which I was to find advantageous in a re-perusal of the appendix, and was only requested to return before my departure from Pumpiter. Looking into the volume now with some curiosity, I found it a very ordinary combination of the commonplace and ambitious, one of those books which one might imagine to have been written under the old Grub Street coercion of hunger and thirst, if they were not known beforehand to be the gratuitous productions of ladies and gentlemen whose circumstances might be called altogether easy, but for an uneasy vanity that happened to have been directed toward authorship. Its importance was that of a polypus, tumor, fungus, or other erratic outgrowth, noxious and disfiguring in its effect on the individual organism which nourishes it. Poor Vorticella might not have been more wearisome on a visit than the majority of her neighbors, but for this disease of magnified self-importance belonging to small authorship. I understand that the chronic complaint of "The Channel Islands" never left her. As the years went on and the publication tended to vanish in the distance for her neighbor's memory, she was still bent on dragging it to the foreground, and her chief interest in new acquaintances was the possibility of lending them her book, entering into all details concerning it, and requesting them to read her album of "critical opinions." This really made her more tiresome than Gregarina, whose distinction was that she had had cholera, and who did not feel herself in her true position with strangers until they knew it.

My experience with Vorticella led me for a long time into the false supposition that this sort of fungous disfiguration, which makes Self disagreeably larger, was most common to the female sex; but I presently found that here too the male could assert his superiority and show a more vigorous boredom. I have known a man with a single pamphlet containing an assurance that somebody else was

wrong, together with a few approved quotations, produce a more powerful effect of shuddering at his approach than ever Vorticella did with her varied octavo volume, including notes and appendix. Males of more than one nation recur to my memory who produced from their pocket on the slightest encouragement a small pink or buff duodecimo pamphlet, wrapped in silver paper, as a present held ready for an intelligent reader. "A mode of propagandism," you remark in excuse; "they wished to spread some useful corrective doctrine." Not necessarily: the indoctrination aimed at was perhaps to convince you of their own talents by the sample of an "Ode on Shakespeare's Birthday," or a translation from Horace.

Vorticella may pair off with Monas, who had also written his one book—"Here and There; or, a Trip form Truro to Transylvania"—and not only carried it in his portmanteau when he went on visits, but took the earliest opportunity of depositing it in the drawing-room, and afterward would enter to look for it, as if under pressure of a need for reference, begging the lady of the house to tell him whether she had seen "a small volume bound in red." One hostess at last ordered it to be carried into his bedroom to save his time; but it presently reappeared in his hands, and was again left with inserted slips of paper on the drawing-room table.

Depend upon it, vanity is human, native alike to men and women; only in the male it is of denser texture, less volatile, so that it less immediately informs you of its presence, but is more massive and capable of knocking you down if you come into collision with it; while in women vanity lays by its small revenges as in a needle-case always at hand. The difference is in muscle and finger-tips, in traditional habits and mental perspective, rather than in the original appetite of vanity. It is an approved method now to explain ourselves by a reference to the races as little like us as possible, which leads me to observe that in Fiji the men use the most elaborate hair-dressing, and that wherever tattooing is in vogue the male expects to carry off the prize of admiration for pattern and workmanship. Arguing analogically, and looking for this tendency of the Fijian or Hawaian male in the eminent European, we must suppose that it exhibits itself under the forms of civilized apparel; and it would be a great mistake to estimate passionate effort by the effect it produces on our perception or understanding. It is conceivable that a man

may have concentrated no less will and expectation on his wristbands, gaiters, and the shape of his hat-brim, or an appearance which impresses you as that of the modern "swell," than the Ojibbeway on an ornamentation which seems to us much more elaborate. In what concerns the search for admiration at least, it is not true that the effect is equal to the cause and resembles it. The cause of a flat curl on the masculine forehead, such as might be seen when George the Fourth was king, must have been widely different in quality and intensity from the impression made by that small scroll of hair on the organ of the beholder. Merely to maintain an attitude and gait which I notice in certain club men, and especially an inflation of the chest accompanying very small remarks, there goes, I am convinced, an expenditure of psychical energy little appreciated by the multitude—a mental vision of Self and deeply impressed beholders which is quite without antitype in what we call the effect produced by that hidden process.

No! there is no need to admit that women would carry away the prize of vanity in a competition where differences of custom were fairly considered. A man cannot show his vanity in a tight skirt which forces him to walk sideways down the staircase; but let the match be between the respective vanities of largest beard and tightest skirt, and here too the battle would be to the strong.

XVI.

MORAL SWINDLERS.

It is a familiar example of irony in the degradation of words that "what a man is worth" has come to mean how much money he possesses; but there seems a deeper and more melancholy irony in the shrunken meaning that popular or polite speech assigns to "morality" and "morals." The poor part these words are made to play recalls the fate of those pagan divinities who, after being understood to rule the powers of the air and the destinies of men, came down to the level of insignificant demons, or were even made a farcical show for the amusement of the multitude.

Talking to Melissa in a time of commercial trouble, I found her disposed to speak pathetically of the disgrace which had fallen on Sir Gavial Mantrap, because of his conduct in relation to the Eocene Mines, and to other companies ingeniously devised by him for the punishment of ignorance in people of small means: a disgrace by which the poor titled gentleman was actually reduced to live in comparative obscurity on his wife's settlement of one or two hundred thousand in the consols.

"Surely your pity is misapplied," said I, rather dubiously, for I like the comfort of trusting that a correct moral judgment is the strong point in woman (seeing that she has a majority of about a million in our islands), and I imagined that Melissa might have some unexpressed grounds for her opinion. "I should have thought you would rather be sorry for Mantrap's victims—the widows, spinsters, and hard-working fathers whom his unscrupulous haste to make himself rich has cheated of all their savings, while he is eating well, lying softly, and after impudently justifying himself before the public, is perhaps joining in the General Confession with a sense that he is an acceptable object in the sight of God, though decent men refuse to meet him."

"Oh, all that about the Companies, I know, was most unfortunate. In commerce people are led to do so many things, and he might not know exactly how everything

would turn out. But Sir Gavial made a good use of his money, and he is a thoroughly *moral* man."

"What do you mean by a thoroughly moral man?" said I.

"Oh, I suppose every one means the same by that," said Melissa, with a slight air of rebuke. "Sir Gavial is an excellent family man—quite blameless there; and so charitable round his place at Tiptop. Very different from Mr. Barabbas, whose life, my husband tells me, is most objectionable, with actresses and that sort of thing. I think a man's morals should make a difference to us. I'm not sorry for Mr. Barabbas, but *I am* sorry for Sir Gavial Mantrap."

I will not repeat my answer to Melissa, for I fear it was offensively brusque, my opinion being that Sir Gavial was the more pernicious scoundrel of the two, since his name for virtue served as an effective part of a swindling apparatus; and perhaps I hinted that to call such a man moral showed rather a silly notion of human affairs. In fact, I had an angry wish to be instructive, and Melissa, as will sometimes happen, noticed my anger without appropriating my instruction, for I have since heard that she speaks of me as rather violent-tempered, and not over strict in my views of morality.

I wish that this narrow use of words which are wanted in their full meaning were confined to women like Melissa. Seeing that Morality and Morals under their *alias* of Ethics are the subject of voluminous discussion, and their true basis a pressing matter of dispute—seeing that the most famous book ever written on Ethics, and forming a chief study in our colleges, allies ethical with political science, or that which treats of the constitution and prosperity of States, one might expect that educated men would find reason to avoid a perversion of language which lends itself to no wider view of life than that of village gossips. Yet I find even respectable historians of our own and of foreign countries, after showing that a king was treacherous, rapacious, and ready to sanction gross breaches in the administration of justice, end by praising him for his pure moral character, by which one must suppose them to mean that he was not lewd nor debauched, not the European twin of the typical Indian potentate whom Macaulay describes as passing his life in chewing bang and fondling dancing-girls. And since we are sometimes told of such maleficent kings that they were religious, we arrive at the

curious result that the most serious wide-reaching duties of man lie quite outside both Morality and Religion—the one of these consisting in not keeping mistresses (and perhaps not drinking too much), and the other in certain ritual and spiritual transactions with God which can be carried on equally well side by side with the basest conduct toward men. With such a classification as this it is no wonder, considering the strong reaction of language on thought, that many minds, dizzy with indigestion of recent science and philosophy, are far to seek for the grounds of social duty, and without entertaining any private intention of committing a perjury which would ruin an innocent man, or seeking gain by supplying bad preserved meats to our navy, feel themselves speculatively obliged to inquire why they should not do so, and are inclined to measure their intellectual subtlety by their dissatisfaction with all answers to this "Why?" It is of little use to theorize in ethics while our habitual phraseology stamps the larger part of our social duties as something that lies aloof from the deepest needs and affections of our nature. The informal definitions of popular language are the only medium through which theory really affects the mass of minds even among the nominally educated; and when a man whose business hours, the solid part of every day, are spent in an unscrupulous course of public or private action which has every calculable chance of causing widespread injury and misery, can be called moral because he comes home to dine with his wife and children and cherishes the happiness of his own hearth, the augury is not good for the use of high ethical and theological disputation.

Not for one moment would one willingly lose sight of the truth that the relation of the sexes and the primary ties of kinship are the deepest roots of human well-being, but to make them by themselves the equivalent of morality is to cut off the channels of feeling through which they are the feeders of that well being. They are the original fountains of a sensibility to the claims of others, which is the bond of societies; but being necessarily in the first instance a private good, there is always the danger that individual selfishness will see in them only the best part of its own gain; just as knowledge, navigation, commerce, and all the conditions which are of a nature to awaken men's consciousness of their mutual dependence and to make the world one great society, are the occasions of selfish, unfair action, of war and oppression, so long as

the public conscience or chief force of feeling and opinion is not uniform and strong enough in its insistence on what is demanded by the general welfare. And among the influences that must retard a right public judgment, the degredation of words which involve praise and blame will be reckoned worth protesting against by every mature observer. To rob words of half their meaning, while they retain their dignity as qualifications, is like allowing to men who have lost half their faculties the same high and perilous command which they won in their time of vigor; or like selling food and seeds after fraudulently abstracting their best virtues: in each case what ought to be beneficently strong is fatally enfeebled, if not empoisoned. until we have altered our dictionaries and have found some other word than *morality* to stand in popular use for the duties of man to man, let us refuse to accept as moral the contractor who enriches himself by using large machinery to make pasteboard soles pass as leather for the feet of unhappy conscripts fighting at miserable odds against invaders: let us rather call him a miscreant, though he were the tenderest, most faithful of husbands, and contend that his own experience of home happiness makes his reckless infliction of suffering on others all the more atrocious. Let us refuse to accept as moral any political leader who should allow his conduct in relation to great issues to be determined by egoistic passion, and boldly say that he would be less immoral even though he were as lax in his personal habits as Sir Robert Walpole, if at the same time his sense of the public welfare were supreme in his mind, quelling all pettier impulses beneath a magnanimous impartiality. And though we were to find among that class of journalists who live by recklessly reporting injurious rumors, insinuating the blackest motives in opponents, descanting at large and with an air of infallibility on dreams which they both find and interpret, and stimulating bad feeling between nations by abusive writing which is as empty of real conviction as the rage of a pantomime king, and would be ludicrous if its effects did not make it appear diabolical—though we were to find among these a man who was benignancy itself in his own circle, a healer of private differences, a soother in private calamities, let us pronounce him nevertheless flagrantly immoral, a root of hideous cancer in the commonwealth, turning the channels of instruction into feeders of social and political disease.

In opposite ways one sees bad effects likely to be encouraged by this narrow use of the word *morals*, shutting out from its meaning half those actions of a man's life which tell momentously on the well-being of his fellow-citizens, and on the preparation of a future for the children growing up around him. Thoroughness of workmanship, care in the execution of every task undertaken, as if it were the acceptance of a trust which it would be a breach of faith not to discharge well, is a form of duty so momentous that if it were to die out from the feeling and practice of a people, all reforms of institutions would be helpless to create national prosperity and national happiness. Do we desire to see public spirit penetrating all classes of the community and affecting every man's conduct, so that he shall make neither the saving of his soul nor any other private saving an excuse for indifference to the general welfare? Well and good. But the sort of public spirit that scamps its bread-winning work, whether with the trowel, the pen, or the overseeing brain, that it may hurry to scenes of political or social agitation, would be as baleful a gift to our people as any malignant demon could devise. One best part of educational training is that which comes through special knowledge and manipulative or other skill, with its usual accompaniment of delight, in relation to work which is the daily bread-winning occupation—which is a man's contribution to the effective wealth of society in return for what he takes as his own share. But this duty of doing one's proper work well, and taking care that every product of one's labor shall be genuinely what it pretends to be, is not only left out of morals in popular speech, it is very little insisted on by public teachers, at least in the only effective way—by tracing the continuous effects of ill-done work. Some of them seem to be still hopeful that it will follow as a necessary consequence from week-day services, ecclesiastical decoration, and improved hymn-books; others apparently trust to descanting on self-culture in general, or to raising a general sense of faulty circumstances; and meanwhile lax, make-shift work from the high conspicuous kind to the average and obscure, is allowed to pass unstamped with the disgrace of immorality, though there is not a member of society who is not daily suffering from it materially and spiritually, and though it is the fatal cause that must degrade our national rank and our commerce in

spite of all open markets and discovery of available coal-seams.

I suppose one may take the popular misuse of the words Morality and Morals as some excuse for certain absurdities which are occasional fashions in speech and writing—certain old lay figures, as ugly as the queerest Asiatic idol, which at different periods get propped into loftiness, and attired in magnificent Venetian drapery, so that whether they have a human face or not is of little consequence. One is, the notion that there is a radical, irreconcilable opposition between intellect and morality. I do not mean the simple statement of fact, which everybody knows, that remarkably able men have had very faulty morals, and have outraged public feeling even at its ordinary standard; but the supposition that the ablest intellect, the highest genius, will see through morality as a sort of twaddle for bibs and tuckers, a doctrine of dullness, a mere incident in human stupidity. We begin to understand the acceptance of this foolishness by considering that we live in a society where we may hear a treacherous monarch, or a malignant and lying politician, or a man who uses either official or literary power as an instrument of his private partiality or hatred, or a manufacturer who devises the falsification of wares, or a trader who deals in virtueless grains-seed, praised or compassionated because of his excellent morals. Clearly if morality meant no more than such decencies as are practiced by these poisonous members of society, it would be possible to say without suspicion of light-headedness, that morality lay aloof from the grand stream of human affairs, as a small channel fed by the stream and not missed from it. While this form of nonsense is conveyed in the popular use of words, there must be plenty of well-dressed ignorance at leisure to run through a box of books, which will feel itself initiated in the free-masonry of intellect by a view of life which might take for a Shakesperian motto—

> "Fair is foul and foul is fair,
> Hover through the fog and filthy air"—

and will find itself easily provided with striking conversation by the rule of reversing all the judgments on good and evil which have come to be the calendar and clock-work of society. But let our habitual talk give morals their full meaning as the conduct which, in every human relation, would follow from the fullest knowledge and the

fullest sympathy—a meaning perpetually corrected and enriched by a more thorough appreciation of dependence in things, and a finer sensibility to both physical and spiritual fact—and this ridiculous ascription of superlative power to minds which have no effective awe-inspiring vision of the human lot, no response of understanding to the connection between duty and the material processes by which the world is kept habitable for cultivated man, will be tacitly discredited without any need to cite the immortal names that all are obliged to take as the measure of intellectual rank and highly-charged genius.

Suppose a Frenchman—I mean no disrespect to the great French nation, for all nations are afflicted with their peculiar parasitic growths, which are lazy, hungry forms, usually characterised by a disproportionate swallowing apparatus: suppose a Parisian who should shuffle down the Boulevard with a soul ignorant of the gravest cares and the deepest tenderness of manhood, and a frame more or less fevered by debauchery, mentally polishing into utmost refinement of phrase and rhythm verses which were an enlargement on that Shakesperian motto, and worthy of the most expensive title to be furnished by the venders of such antithetic ware as *Les marguerites de l'Enfer*, or *Les délices de Béelzébuth*. This supposed personage might probably enough regard his negation of those moral sensibilities which make half the warp and woop of human history, his indifference to the hard thinking and hard handiwork of life, to which he owed even his own gauzy mental garments with their spangles of poor paradox, as the royalty of genius, for we are used to witness such self-crowning in many forms of mental alienation; but he would not, I think, be taken, even by his own generation, as a living proof that there can exist such a combination as that of moral stupidity and trivial emphasis of personal indulgence with the large yet finely discriminating vision which marks the intellectual masters of our kind. Doubtless there are many sorts of transfiguration, and a man who has come to be worthy of all gratitude and reverence may have had his swinish period, wallowing in ugly places; but suppose it had been handed down to us that Sophocles or Virgil had at one time made himself scandalous in this way: the works which have consecrated their memory for our admiration and gratitude are not a glorifying of swinishness, but an artistic incorporation of the highest sentiment known to their age.

All these may seem to be wide reasons for objecting to Melissa's pity for Sir Gavial Mantrap on the ground of his good morals; but their connection will not be obscure to anyone who has taken pains to observe the links uniting the scattered signs of our social development.

XVII.

SHADOWS OF THE COMING RACE.

My friend Trost, who is no optimist as to the state of the universe hitherto, but is confident that at some future period within the duration of the solar system, ours will be the best of all possible worlds—a hope which I always honor as a sign of beneficent qualities—my friend Trost always tries to keep up my spirits under the sight of the extremely unpleasant and disfiguring work by which many of our fellow creatures have to get their bread, with the assurance that "all this will soon be done by machinery." But he sometimes neutralizes the consolation by extending it over so large an area of human labor, and insisting so impressively on the quantity of energy which will thus be set free for loftier purposes, that I am tempted to desire an occasional famine of invention in the coming ages, lest the humbler kinds of work should be entirely nullified while there are still left some men and women who are not fit for the highest.

Especially, when one considers the perfunctory way in which some of the most exalted tasks are already executed by those who are understood to be educated for them, there rises a fearful vision of the human race evolving machinery which will by-and-by throw itself fatally out of work. When, in the Bank of England, I see a wondrously delicate machine for testing sovereigns, a shrewd implacable little steel Rhadamanthus that, once the coins are delivered up to it, lifts and balances each in turn for the fraction of an instant, finds it wanting or sufficient, and dismisses it to right or left with rigorous justice; when I am told of micrometers and thermopiles and tasimeters which deal physically with the invisible, the impalpable, and the unimaginable; of cunning wires and wheels and pointing needles which will register your and my quickness so as to exclude flattering opinion; of a machine for drawing the right conclusion, which will doubtless by-and-by be improved into an automaton for finding true premises; of a microphone which detects the cadence of the fly's foot on the ceiling, and may be expected presently to discriminate

the noises of our various follies as they soliloquize or converse in our brains—my mind seeming too small for these things, I get a little out of it, like an unfortunate savage too suddenly brought face to face with civilization, and I exclaim—

"Am I already in the shadow of the Coming Race? and will the creatures who are to transcend and finally supersede us be steely organisms, giving out the effluvia of the laboratory, and performing with infallible exactness more than everything that we have performed with a slovenly approximativeness and self-defeating inaccuracy?"

"But," says Trost, treating me with cautious mildness on hearing me vent this raving notion, "you forget that these wonder-workers are the slaves of our race, need our tendance and regulation, obey the mandates of our consciousness, and are only deaf and dumb bringers of reports which we decipher and make use of. They are simply extensions of the human organism, so to speak, limbs immeasurably more powerful, ever more subtle finger-tips, ever more mastery over the invisibly great and the invisibly small. Each new machine needs a new appliance of human skill to construct it, new devices to feed it with material, and often keener-edged faculties to note its registrations or performances. How then can machines supersede us?—they depend upon us. When we cease, they cease."

"I am not so sure of that," said I, getting back into my mind, and becoming rather willful in consequence. "If, as I have heard you contend, machines as they are more and more perfected will require less and less of tendance, how do I know that they may not be ultimately made to carry, or may not in themselves evolve, conditions of self-supply, self-repair, and reproduction, and not only do all the mighty and subtle work possible on this planet better than we could do it, but with the immense advantage of banishing from the earth's atmosphere screaming consciousnesses which, in our comparatively clumsy race, make an intolerable noise and fuss to each other about every petty ant-like performance, looking on at all work only as it were to spring a rattle here or blow a trumpet there, with a ridiculous sense of being effective? I for my part cannot see any reason why a sufficiently penetrating thinker, who can see his way through a thousand years or so, should not conceive a parliament of machines, in which the manners were excellent and the motions infallible in

logic: one honorable instrument, a remote descendant of the Voltaic family, might discharge a powerful current (entirely without animosity) on an honorable instrument opposite, of more upstart origin, but belonging to the ancient edge-tool race which we already at Sheffield see paring thick iron as if it were mellow cheese—by this unerringly directed discharge operating on movements corresponding to what we call Estimates, and by necessary mechanical consequence on movements corresponding to what we call the Funds, which with a vain analogy we sometimes speak of as "sensitive." For every machine would be perfectly educated, that is to say, would have the suitable molecular adjustments, which would act not the less infallibly for being free from the fussy accompaniment of that consciousness to which our prejudice gives a supreme governing rank, when in truth it is an idle parasite on the grand sequence of things."

"Nothing of the sort!" returned Trost, getting angry, and judging it kind to treat me with some severity; "what you have heard me say is, that our race will and must act as a nervous center to the utmost development of mechanical processes: the subtly refined powers of machines will react in producing more subtly refined thinking processes which will occupy the minds set free from grosser labor. Say, for example, that all the scavengers' work of London were done, so far as human attention is concerned, by the occasional pressure of a brass button (as in the ringing of an electric bell), you will then have a multitude of brains set free for the exquisite enjoyment of dealing with the exact sequences and high speculations supplied and prompted by the delicate machines which yield a response to the fixed stars, and give readings of the spiral vortices fundamentally concerned in the production of epic poems or great judicial harangues. So far from mankind being thrown out of work according to your notion," concluded Trost, with a peculiar nasal note of scorn, "if it were not for your incurable dilettanteism in science as in all other things—if you had once understood the action of any delicate machine, you would perceive that the sequences it carries throughout the realm of phenomena would require many generations, perhaps æons, of understandings considerably stronger than yours, to exhaust the store of work it lays open."

"Precisely," said I, with a meekness which I felt was praiseworthy; "it is the feebleness of my capacity, bring-

ing me nearer than you to the human average, that perhaps enables me to imagine certain results better than you can. Doubtless the very fishes of our rivers, gullible as they look, and slow as they are to be rightly convinced in another order of facts, form fewer false expectations about each other than we should form about them if we were in a position of somewhat fuller intercourse with their species; for even as it is we have continually to be surprised that they do not rise to our carefully selected bait. Take me then as a sort of reflective and experienced carp: but do not estimate the justice of my ideas by my facial expression."

"Pooh!" says Trost. (We are on very intimate terms.)

"Naturally," I persisted, "it is less easy to you than to me to imagine our race transcended and superseded, since the more energy a being is possessed of, the harder it must be for him to conceive his own death. But I, from the point of view of a reflective carp, can easily imagine myself and my congeners dispensed with in the frame of things and giving way not only to a superior but a vastly different kind of Entity. What I would ask you is, to show me why, since each new invention casts a new light along the pathway of discovery, and each new combination or structure brings into play more conditions than its inventor foresaw, there should not at length be a machine of such high mechanical and chemical powers that it would find and assimilate the material to supply its own waste, and then by a further evolution of internal molecular movements reproduce itself by some process of fission or budding. This last stage having been reached, either by man's contrivance or as an unforeseen result, one sees that the process of natural selection must drive men altogether out of the field; for they will long before have begun to sink into the miserable condition of those unhappy characters in fable who, having demons or djinns at their beck, and being obliged to supply them with work, found too much of everything done in too short a time. What demons so potent as molecular movements, none the less tremendously potent for not carrying the futile cargo of a consciousness screeching irrelevantly, like a fowl tied head downmost to the saddle of a swift horseman. Under such uncomfortable circumstances, our race will have diminished with the diminishing call on their energies, and by the time that the self-repairing and reproducing machines arise, all but a few of the rare inventors, calcu-

lators and speculators will have become pale, pulpy and cretinous from fatty or other degeneration, and behold around them a scanty hydrocephalous offspring. As to the breed of the ingenious and intellectual, their nervous systems will at last have been overwrought in following the molecular revelations of the immensely more powerful unconscious race, and they will naturally, as the less energetic combinations of movement, subside like the flame of a candle in the sunlight. Thus the feebler race, whose corporeal adjustments happened to be accompanied with a maniacal consciousness which imagined itself moving its mover, will have vanished, as all less adapted existences do before the fittest—*i.e.*, the existence composed of the most persistent groups of movements and the most capable of incorporating new groups in harmonious relation. Who—if our consciousness is, as I have been given to understand, a mere stumbling of our organisms on their way to unconscious perfection—who shall say that those fittest existences will not be found along the track of what we call inorganic combinations, which will carry on the most elaborate processes as mutely and painlessly as we are now told that the minerals are metamorphosing themselves continually in the dark laboratory of the earth's crust? Thus this planet may be filled with beings who will be blind and deaf as the inmost rock, yet will execute changes as delicate and complicated as those of human language and all the intricate web of what we call its effects, without sensitive impression, without sensitive impulse: there may be, let us say, mute orations, mute rhapsodies, mute discussions, and no consciousness there even to enjoy the silence."

"Absurd!" grumbled Trost.

"The supposition is logical," said I. "It is well argued from the premises."

"Whose premises?" cried Trost, turning on me with some fierceness. "You don't mean to call them mine, I hope."

"Heaven forbid! They seem to be flying about in the air with other germs, and have found a sort of nidus among my melancholy fancies. Nobody really holds them. They bear the same relation to real belief as walking on the head for a show does to running away from an explosion or walking fast to catch the train."

XVIII.

THE MODERN HEP! HEP! HEP!

To DISCERN likeness amidst diversity, it is well known, does not require so fine a mental edge as the discerning of diversity amidst general sameness. The primary rough classification depends on the prominent resemblances of things: the progress is toward finer and finer discrimination according to minute differences.

Yet even at this stage of European culture one's attention is continually drawn to the prevalence of that grosser mental sloth which makes people dull to the most ordinary prompting of comparison—the bringing things together because of their likeness. The same motives, the same ideas, the same practices, are alternately admired and abhorred, lauded and denounced, according to their association with superficial differences, historical or actually social: even learned writers treating of great subjects often show an attitude of mind not greatly superior in its logic to that of the frivolous fine lady who is indignant at the frivolity of her maid.

To take only the subject of the Jews: it would be difficult to find a form of bad reasoning about them which has not been heard in conversation or been admitted to the dignity of print; but the neglect of resemblances is a common property of dullness which unites all the various points of view—the prejudiced, the puerile, the spiteful, and the abysmally ignorant.

That the preservation of national memories is an element and a means of national greatness, that their revival is a sign of reviving nationality, that every heroic defender, every patriotic restorer, has been inspired by such memories and has made them his watchword, that even such a corporate existence as that of a Roman legion or an English regiment has been made valorous by memorial standards,—these are the glorious commonplaces of historic teaching at our public schools and universities, being happily ingrained in Greek and Latin classics. They have also been impressed on the world by conspicuous modern instances. That there is a free modern Greece is due—

through all infiltration of other than Greek blood—to the presence of ancient Greece in the consciousness of European men; and every speaker would feel his point safe if he were to praise Byron's devotion to a cause made glorious by ideal identification with the past; hardly so, if he were to insist that the Greeks were not to be helped further because their history shows that they were anciently unsurpassed in treachery and lying, and that many modern Greeks are highly disreputable characters, while others are disposed to grasp too large a share of our commerce. The same with Italy: the pathos of his country's lot pierced the youthful soul of Mazzini, because, like Dante's, his blood was fraught with the kinship of Italian greatness, his imagination filled with a majestic past that wrought itself into a majestic future. Half a century ago what was Italy? An idling-place of dilettanteism or of itinerant motiveless wealth, a territory parceled out for papal sustenance, dynastic convenience, and the profit of an alien government. What were the Italians? No people, no voice in European counsels, no massive power in European affairs, a race thought of in English and French society as chiefly adapted to the operatic stage, or to serve as models for painters; disposed to smile gratefully at the reception of halfpence; and by the more historical remembered to be rather polite than truthful, in all probability a combination of Machiavelli, Rubini, and Masaniello. Thanks chiefly to the divine gift of a memory which inspires the moments with a past, a present, and a future, and gives the sense of corporate existence that raises man above the otherwise more respectable and innocent brute, all that, or most of it is changed.

Again, one of our living historians finds just sympathy in his vigorous insistence on our true ancestry, on our being the strongly marked heritors in language and genius of those old English seamen who, beholding a rich country with a most convenient seaboard, came doubtless with a sense of divine warrant, and settled themselves on this or the other side of fertilizing streams, gradually conquering more and more of the pleasant land from the natives who knew nothing of Odin, and finally making unusually clean work in ridding themselves of those prior occupants. "Let us," he virtually says, "let us know who were our forefathers, who it was that won the soil for us, and brought the good seed of those institutions through which we should not arrogantly but gratefully feel ourselves

distinguished among the nations as possessors of long-inherited freedom; let us not keep up an ignorant kind of naming which disguises our true affinities of blood and language, but let us see thoroughly what sort of notions and traditions our forefathers had, and what sort of song inspired them. Let the poetic fragments which breathe forth their fierce bravery in battle and their trust in fierce gods who helped them, be treasured with affectionate reverence. These seafaring, invading, self-asserting men were the English of old time, and were our fathers who did rough work by which we are profiting. They had virtues which incorporated themselves in wholesome usages to which we trace our own political blessings. Let us know and acknowledge our common relationship to them, and be thankful that over and above the affections and duties which spring from our manhood, we have the closer and more constantly guiding duties which belong to us as Englishmen."

To this view of our nationality most persons who have feeling and understanding enough to be conscious of the connection between the patriotic affection and every other affection which lifts us above emigrating rats and free-loving baboons, will be disposed to say Amen. True, we are not indebted to those ancestors for our religion; we are rather proud of having got that illumination from elsewhere. The men who planted our nation were not Christians, though they began their work centuries after Christ; and they had a decided objection to Christianity when it was first proposed to them; they were not monotheists, and their religion was the reverse of spiritual. But since we have been fortunate enough to keep the island-home they won for us, and have been on the whole a prosperous people, rather continuing the plan of invading and spoiling other lands than being forced to beg for shelter in them, nobody has reproached us because our fathers thirteen hundred years ago worshipped Odin, massacred Britons, and were with difficulty persuaded to accept Christianity, knowing nothing of Hebrew history and the reasons why Christ should be received as the Savior of mankind. The Red Indians, not liking us when we settled among them, might have been willing to fling such facts in our faces, but they were too ignorant, and besides, their opinions did not signify, because we were able, if we liked, to exterminate them. The Hindoos also have doubtless had their rancors against us and still entertain

enough ill-will to make unfavorable remarks on our character, especially as to our historic rapacity and arrogant notions of our own superiority; they perhaps do not admire the usual English profile, and they are not converted to our way of feeding; but though we are a small number of an alien race profiting by the territory and produce of these prejudiced people, they are unable to turn us out; at least, when they tried we showed them their mistake. We do not call ourselves a dispersed and punished people; we are a colonizing people, and it is we who have punished others.

Still the historian guides us rightly in urging us to dwell on the virtues of our ancestors with emulation, and to cherish our sense of common descent as a bond of obligation. The eminence, the nobleness of a people, depends on its capability of being stirred by memories, and of striving for what we call spiritual ends—ends which consist not in immediate material possession, but in the satisfaction of a great feeling that animates the collective body as with one soul. A people having the seed of worthiness in it must feel an answering thrill when it is adjured by the deaths of its heroes who died to preserve it national existence; when it is reminded of its small beginnings and gradual growth through past labors and struggles, such as are still demanded of it in order that the freedom and well-being thus inherited may be transmitted unimpaired to children and children's children; when an appeal against the permission of injustice is made to great precedents in its history and to the better genius breathing in its institutions. It is this living force of sentiment in common which makes a national consciousness. Nations so moved will resist conquest with the very breasts of their women, will pay their millions and their blood to abolish slavery, will share privation in famine and all calamity, will produce poets to sing "some great story of a man," and thinkers whose theories will bear the test of action. An individual man, to be harmoniously great, must belong to a nation of this order, if not in actual existence yet existing in the past, in memory, as a departed, invisible, beloved ideal, once a reality, and perhaps to be restored. A common humanity is not yet enough to feed the rich blood of various activity which makes a complete man. The time is not come for cosmopolitanism to be highly virtuous, any more than for communism to suffice for social energy. I am not bound to feel for a Chinaman as I feel for my fellow-countryman: I am bound not to

demoralize him with opium, not to compel him to my will by destroying or plundering the fruits of his labor on the alleged ground that he is not cosmopolitan enough, and not to insult him for his want of my tailoring and religion when he appears as a peaceable visitor on the London pavement. It is admirable in a Briton with a good purpose to learn Chinese, but it would not be a proof of fine intellect in him to taste Chinese poetry in the original more than he tastes the poetry of his own tongue. Affection, intelligence, duty, radiate from a center, and nature has decided that for us English folk that center can be neither China nor Peru. Most of us feel this unreflectingly; for the affectation of undervaluing everything native, and being too fine for one's own country, belongs only to a few minds of no dangerous leverage. What is wanting is, that we should recognize a corresponding attachment to nationality as legitimate in every other people, and understand that its absence is a privation of the greatest good.

For, to repeat, not only the nobleness of a nation depends on the presence of this national consciousness, but also the nobleness of each individual citizen. Our dignity and rectitude are proportioned to our sense of relationship with something great, admirable, pregnant with high possibilities, worthy of sacrifice, a continual inspiration to self-repression and discipline by the presentation of aims larger and more attractive to our generous part than the securing of personal ease or prosperity. And a people possessing this good should surely feel not only a ready sympathy with the effort of those who, having lost the good, strive to regain it, but a profound pity for any degradation resulting from its loss; nay, something more than pity when happier nationalities have made victims of the unfortunate whose memories nevertheless are the very fountain to which the persecutors trace their most vaunted blessings.

These notions are familiar: few will deny them in the abstract, and many are found loudly asserting them in relation to this or the other particular case. But here as elsewhere, in the ardent application of ideas, there is a notable lack of simple comparison or sensibility to resemblance. The European world has long been used to consider the Jews as altogether exceptional, and it has followed naturally enough that they have been excepted from the rules of justice and mercy, which are based on human likeness. But to consider a people whose ideas have determined the

religion of half the world, and that the more cultivated half, and who made the most eminent struggle against the power of Rome, as a purely exceptional race, is a demoralizing offense against rational knowledge, a stultifying inconsistency in historical interpretation. Every nation of forcible character—*i. e.*, of strongly marked characteristics, is so far exceptional. The distinctive note of each bird-species is in this sense exceptional, but the necessary ground of such distinction is a deeper likeness. The superlative peculiarity in the Jews admitted, our affinity with them is only the more apparent when the elements of their peculiarity are discerned.

From whatever point of view the writings of the Old Testament may be regarded, the picture they present of a national development is of high interest and speciality, nor can their historic momentousness be much affected by any varieties of theory as to the relation they bear to the New Testament or to the rise and constitution of Christianity. Whether we accept the canonical Hebrew books as a revelation or simply as part of an ancient literature, makes no difference to the fact that we find there the strongly characterized portraiture of a people educated from an earlier or later period to a sense of separateness unique in its intensity, a people taught by many concurrent influences to identify faithfulness to its national traditions with the highest social and religious blessings. Our too scanty sources of Jewish history, from the return under Ezra to the beginning of the desperate resistance against Rome, show us the heroic and triumphant struggle of the Maccabees, which rescued the religion and independence of the nation from the corrupting sway of the Syrian Greeks, adding to the glorious sum of its memorials, and stimulating continuous efforts of a more peaceful sort to maintain and develop that national life which the heroes had fought and died for, by internal measures of legal administration and public teaching. Thenceforth the virtuous elements of the Jewish life were engaged, as they had been with varying aspects during the long and changeful prophetic period and the restoration under Ezra, on the side of preserving the specific national character against a demoralizing fusion with that of foreigners whose religion and ritual were idolatrous and often obscene. There was always a Foreign party reviling the National party as narrow, and sometimes manifesting their own breadth in extensive views of advancement or profit to

themselves by flattery of a foreign power. Such internal conflict naturally tightened the bands of conservatism, which needed to be strong if it were to rescue the sacred ark, the vital spirit of a small nation—"the smallest of the nations"—whose territory lay on the highway between three continents; and when the dread and hatred of foreign sway had condensed itself into dread and hatred of the Romans, many Conservatives became Zealots, whose chief mark was that they advocated resistance to the death against the submergence of their nationality. Much might be said on this point toward distinguishing the desperate struggle against a conquest which is regarded as degradation and corruption, from rash, hopeless insurrection against an established native government; and for my part (if that were of any consequence) I share the spirit of the Zealots. I take the spectacle of the Jewish people defying the Roman edict, and preferring death by starvation or the sword to the introduction of Caligula's deified statue into the temple, as a sublime type of steadfastness. But all that need be noticed here is the continuity of that national education (by outward and inward circumstance) which created in the Jews a feeling of race, a sense of corporate existence, unique in its intensity.

But not, before the dispersion, unique in essential qualities. There is more likeness than contrast between the way we English got our island and the way the Israelites got Canaan. We have not been noted for forming a low estimate of ourselves in comparison with foreigners, or for admitting that our institutions are equaled by those of any other people under the sun. Many of us have thought that our sea-wall is a specially divine arrangement to make and keep us a nation of sea-kings after the manner of our forefathers, secure against invasion and able to invade other lands when we need them, though they may lie on the other side of the ocean. Again, it has been held that we have a peculiar destiny as a Protestant people, not only able to bruise the head of an idolatrous Christianity in the midst of us, but fitted as possessors of the most truth and the most tonnage to carry our purer religion over the world and convert mankind to our way of thinking. The Puritans, asserting their liberty to restrain tyrants, found the Hebrew history closely symbolical of their feelings and purpose; and it can hardly be correct to cast the blame of their less laudable doings on the writings they invoked, since their opponents made use of the

same writings for different ends, finding there a strong warrant for the divine right of kings and the denunciation of those who, like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, took on themselves the office of the priesthood which belonged of right solely to Aaron and his sons, or, in other words, to men ordained by the English bishops. We must rather refer the passionate use of the Hebrew writings to affinities of disposition between our own race and the Jewish. Is it true that the arrogance of a Jew was so immeasurably beyond that of a Calvinist? And the just sympathy and admiration which we give to the ancestors who resisted the oppressive acts of our native kings, and by resisting rescued or won for us the best part of our civil and religious liberties—is it justly to be withheld from those brave and steadfast men of Jewish race who fought and died, or strove by wise administration to resist, the oppression and corrupting influences of foreign tyrants, and by resisting rescued the nationality which was the very hearth of our own religion? At any rate, seeing that the Jews were more specifically than any other nation educated into a sense of their supreme moral value, the chief matter of surprise is that any other nation is found to rival them in this form of self-confidence.

More exceptional—less like the course of our own history—has been their dispersion and their subsistence as a separate people through ages in which for the most part they were regarded and treated very much as beasts hunted for the sake of their skins, or of a valuable secretion peculiar to their species. The Jews showed a talent for accumulating what was an object of more immediate desire to Christians than animal oils or well-furred skins, and their cupidity and avarice were found at once particularly hateful and particularly useful: hateful when seen as a reason for punishing them by mulcting or robbery, useful when this retributive process could be successfully carried forward. Kings and emperors naturally were more alive to the usefulness of subjects who could gather and yield money; but edicts issued to protect "the King's Jews" equally with the King's game from being harassed and hunted by the commonalty were only slight mitigations to the deplorable lot of a race held to be under the divine curse, and had little force after the Crusades began. As the slave-holders in the United States counted the curse on Ham a justification of negro slavery, so the curse on the Jews was counted a justification for hindering them

from pursuing agriculture and handicrafts; for marking them out as execrable figures by a peculiar dress; for torturing them to make them part with their gains, or for more gratuitously spitting at them and pelting them; for taking it as certain that they killed and ate babies, poisoned the wells, and took pains to spread the plague; for putting it to them whether they would be baptized or burned, and not failing to burn and massacre them when they were obstinate; but also for suspecting them of disliking the baptism when they had got it, and then burning them in punishment of their insincerity; finally, for hounding them by tens on tens of thousands from the homes where they had found shelter for centuries, and inflicting on them the horrors of a new exile and a new dispersion. All this to avenge the Saviour of mankind, or else to compel these stiff-necked people to acknowledge a Master whose Servants showed such beneficent effects of His teaching.

With a people so treated one of two issues was possible: either from being of feebler nature than their persecutors, and caring more for ease than for the sentiments and ideas which constituted their distinctive character, they would everywhere give way to pressure and get rapidly merged in the populations around them; or being endowed with uncommon tenacity, physical and mental, feeling peculiarly the ties of inheritance both in blood and faith, remembering national glories, trusting in their recovery, abhorring apostasy, able to bear all things and hope all things with a consciousness of being steadfast to spiritual obligations, the kernel of their number would harden into an inflexibility more and more insured by motive and habit. They would cherish all differences that marked them off from their hated oppressors, all memories that consoled them with a sense of virtual though unrecognized superiority; and the separateness which was made their badge of ignominy would be their inward pride, their source of fortifying defiance. Doubtless such a people would get confirmed in vices. An oppressive government and a persecuting religion, while breeding vices in those who hold power, are well known to breed answering vices in those who are powerless and suffering. What more direct plan than the course presented by European history could have been pursued in order to give the Jews a spirit of bitter isolation, of scorn for the wolfish hypocrisy that made victims of them, of

triumph in prospering at the expense of the blunderers who stoned them away from the open paths of industry?—or, on the other hand, to encourage in the less defiant a lying conformity, a pretense of conversion for the sake of the social advantages attached to baptism, an outward renunciation of their hereditary ties with the lack of real love toward the society and creed which exacted this galling tribute?—or again, in the most unhappy specimens of the race, to rear transcendent examples of odious vice, reckless instruments of rich men with bad propensities, unscrupulous grinders of the alien people who wanted to grind *them?*

No wonder the Jews have their vices: no wonder if it were proved (which it has not hitherto appeared to be) that some of them have a bad pre-eminence in evil, an unrivaled superfluity of naughtiness. It would be more plausible to make a wonder of the virtues which have prospered among them under the shadow of oppression. But instead of dwelling on these, or treating as admitted what any hardy or ignorant person may deny, let us found simply on the loud assertions of the hostile. The Jews, it is said, resisted the expansion of their own religion into Christianity; they were in the habit of spitting on the cross; they have held the name of Christ to be *Anathema.* Who taught them that? The men who made Christianity a curse to them; the men who made the name of Christ a symbol for the spirit of vengeance, and, what was worse, made the execution of the vengeance a pretext for satisfying their own savageness, greed and envy; the men who sanctioned with the name of Christ a barbaric and blundering copy of pagan fatalism in taking the words "His blood be upon us and on our children" as a divinely appointed verbal warrant for wreaking cruelty from generation to generation on the people from whose sacred writings Christ drew His teaching. Strange retrogression in the professors of an expanded religion, boasting an illumination beyond the spiritual doctrine of Hebrew prophets! For Hebrew prophets proclaimed a God who demanded mercy rather than sacrifices. The Christians also believed that God delighted not in the blood of rams and of bulls, but they apparently conceived Him as requiring for His satisfaction the sighs and groans, the blood and roasted flesh of men whose forefathers had misunderstood the metaphorical character of prophecies which spoke of spiritual pre-eminence under the figure of a

material kingdom. Was this the method by which Christ desired His title to the Messiahship to be commended to the hearts and understandings of the nation in which He was born? Many of His sayings bear the stamp of that patriotism which places fellow-countrymen in the inner circle of affection and duty. And did the words, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do," refer only to the centurion and his band, a tacit exception being made of every Hebrew there present from the mercy of the Father and the compassion of the Son? Nay, more, of every Hebrew yet to come who remained unconverted after hearing of His claim to the Messiahship, not from His own lips or those of His native apostles, but from the lips of alien men whom cross, creed, and baptism had left cruel, rapacious, and debauched? It is more reverent to Christ to believe that He must have approved the Jewish martyrs who deliberately chose to be burned or massacred rather than be guilty of a blaspheming lie, more than He approved the rabble of crusaders who robbed and murdered them in His name.

But these remonstrances seem to have no direct application to personages who take up the attitude of philosophic thinkers and discriminating critics, professedly accepting Christianity from a rational point of view as a vehicle of the highest religious and moral truth, and condemning the Jews on the ground that they are obstinate adherents of an outworn creed, maintain themselves in moral alienation from the peoples with whom they share citizenship, and are destitute of real interest in the welfare of the community and state with which they are thus identified. These anti-Judaic advocates usually belong to a party which has felt itself glorified in winning for Jews, as well as Dissenters and Catholics, the full privileges of citizenship, laying open to them every path to distinction. At one time the voice of this party urged that differences of creed were made dangerous only by the denial of citizenship—that you must make a man a citizen before he could feel like one. At present, apparently, this confidence has been succeeded by a sense of mistake: there is a regret that no limiting clauses were insisted on, such as would have hindered the Jews from coming too far and in too large proportion along those opened pathways: and the Roumanians are thought to have shown an enviable wisdom in giving them as little chance as possible. But then, the reflection occurring that some of the most ob-

jectionable Jews are baptized Christians, it is obvious that such clauses would have been insufficient, and the doctrine that you can turn a Jew into a good Christian is emphatically retracted. But clearly, these liberal gentlemen, too late enlightened by disagreeable events, must yield the palm of wise foresight to those who argued against them long ago; and it is a striking spectacle to witness minds so panting for advancement in some directions that they are ready to force it on an unwilling society, in this instance despairingly recurring to mediæval types of thinking—insisting that the Jews are made viciously cosmopolitan by holding the world's money-bag, that for them all national interests are resolved into the algebra of loans, that they have suffered an inward degradation stamping them as morally inferior, and—"serve them right," since they rejected Christianity. All which is mirrored in an analogy, namely, that of the Irish, also a servile race, who have rejected Protestantism though it has been repeatedly urged on them by fire and sword and penal laws, and whose place in the moral scale may be judged by our advertisements, where the clause, "No Irish need apply," parallels the sentence which for many polite persons sums up the question of Judaism—"I never *did* like the Jews."

It is certainly worth considering whether an expatriated, denationalized race, used for ages to live among antipathetic populations, must not inevitably lack some conditions of nobleness. If they drop that separateness which is made their reproach, they may be in danger of lapsing into a cosmopolitan indifference equivalent to cynicism, and of missing that inward identification with the nationality immediately around them which might make some amends for their inherited privation. No dispassionate observer can deny this danger. Why, our own countrymen who take to living abroad without purpose or function to keep up their sense of fellowship in the affairs of their own land are rarely good specimens of moral healthiness; still, the consciousness of having a native country, the birthplace of common memories and habits of mind, existing like a parental hearth quitted but beloved; the dignity of being included in a people which has a part in the comity of nations and the growing federation of the world; that sense of special belonging which is the root of human virtues, both public and private,—all these spiritual links may preserve migratory Englishmen from the worst consequences of their volun-

tary dispersion. Unquestionably the Jews, having been more than any other race exposed to the adverse moral influences of alienism, must, both in individuals and in groups, have suffered some corresponding moral degradation; but in fact they have escaped with less of abjectness and less of hard hostility toward the nations whose hand has been against them, than could have happened in the case of a people who had neither their adhesion to a separate religion founded on historic memories, nor their characteristic family affectionateness. Tortured, flogged, spit upon, the *corpus vile* on which rage or wantonness vented themselves with impunity, their name flung at them as an opprobrium by superstition, hatred, and contempt, they have remained proud of their origin. Does any one call this an evil pride? Perhaps he belongs to that order of man who, while he has a democratic dislike to dukes and earls, wants to make believe that his father was an idle gentleman, when in fact he was an honorable artisan, or who would feel flattered to be taken for other than an Englishman. It is possible to be too arrogant about our blood or our calling, but that arrogance is virtue compared with such mean pretense. The pride which identifies us with a great historic body is a humanizing, elevating habit of mind, inspiring sacrifices of individual comfort, gain, or other selfish ambition, for the sake of that ideal whole; and no man swayed by such a sentiment can become completely abject. That a Jew of Smyrna, where a whip is carried by passengers ready to flog off the too officious specimens of his race, can still be proud to say, "I am a Jew," is surely a fact to awaken admiration in a mind capable of understanding what we may call the ideal forces in human history. And again, a varied, impartial observation of the Jews in different countries tends to the impression that they have a predominant kindliness which must have been deeply ingrained in the constitution of their race to have outlasted the ages of persecution and oppression. The concentration of their joys in domestic life has kept up in them the capacity of tenderness: the pity for the fatherless and the widow, the care for the women and the little ones, blent intimately with their religion, is a well of mercy that cannot long or widely be pent up by exclusiveness. And the kindliness of the Jew overflows the line of division between him and the Gentile. On the whole, one of the most remarkable phenomena in the history of this scattered people, made

for ages "a scorn and a hissing," is, that after being subjected to this process, which might have been expected to be in every sense deteriorating and vitiating, they have come out of it (in any estimate which allows for numerical proportion) rivaling the nations of all European countries in healthiness and beauty of *physique*, in practical ability, in scientific and artistic aptitude, and in some forms of ethical value. A significant indication of their natural rank is seen in the fact that at this moment, the leader of the Liberal party in Germany is a Jew, the leader of the Republican party in France is a Jew, and the head of the Conservative ministry in England is a Jew.

And here it is that we find the ground for the obvious jealousy which is now stimulating the revived expression of old antipathies. "The Jews," it is felt, "have a dangerous tendency to get the uppermost places not only in commerce but in political life. Their monetary hold on governments is tending to perpetuate in leading Jews a spirit of universal alienism (euphemistically called cosmopolitanism), even where the West has given them a full share in civil and political rights. A people with oriental sunlight in their blood, yet capable of being everywhere acclimatized, they have a force and toughness which enables them to carry off the best prizes; and their wealth is likely to put half the seats in Parliament at their disposal."

There is truth in these views of Jewish social and political relations. But it is rather too late for liberal pleaders to urge them in a merely vituperative sense. Do they propose as a remedy for the impending danger of our healthier national influences getting overriden by Jewish predominance, that we should repeal our emancipatory laws? Not all the Germanic immigrants who have been settling among us for generations, and are still pouring in to settle, are Jews, but thoroughly Teutonic and more or less Christian craftsmen, mechanicians, or skilled and erudite functionaries; and the Semitic Christians who swarm among us are dangerously like their unconverted brethren in complexion, persistence, and wealth. Then there are the Greeks who, by the help of Phœnician blood or otherwise, are objectionably strong in the city. Some judges think that the Scotch are more numerous and prosperous here in the South than is quite for the good of us Southerners; and the early inconvenience felt under the Stuarts of being quartered upon by a hungry, hard-work-

ing people with a distinctive accent and form of religion, and higher cheek-bones than English taste requires, has not yet been quite neutralized. As for the Irish, it is felt in high quarters that we have always been too lenient toward them;—at least, if they had been harried a little more there might not have been so many of them on the English press, of which they divide the power with the Scotch, thus driving many Englishmen to honest and ineloquent labor.

So far shall we be carried if we go in search of devices to hinder people of other blood than our own from getting the advantage of dwelling among us.

Let it be admitted that it is a calamity to the English, as to any other great historic people, to undergo a premature fusion with immigrants of alien blood; that its distinctive national characteristics should be in danger of obliteration by the predominating quality of foreign settlers. I not only admit this, I am ready to unite in groaning over the threatened danger. To one who loves his native language, who would delight to keep our rich and harmonious English undefiled by foreign accent, foreign intonation, and those foreign tinctures of verbal meaning which tend to confuse all writing and discourse, it is an affliction as harassing as the climate, that on our stage, in our studios, at our public and private gatherings, in our offices, warehouses, and workshops, we must expect to hear our beloved English with its words clipped, its vowels stretched and twisted, its phrases of acquiescence and politeness, of cordiality, dissidence or argument, delivered always in the wrong tones, like ill-rendered melodies, marred beyond recognition; that there should be a general ambition to speak every language except our mother English, which persons "of style" are not ashamed of corrupting with slang, false foreign equivalents, and a pronunciation that crushes out all color from the vowels and jams them between jostling consonants. An ancient Greek might not like to be resuscitated for the sake of hearing Homer read in our universities, still he would at least find more instructive marvels in other developments to be witnessed at those institutions; but a modern Englishman is invited from his after-dinner repose to hear Shakespeare delivered under circumstances which offer no other novelty than some novelty of false intonation, some new distribution of strong emphasis on prepositions, some new misconception of a familiar idiom. Well! it is our

inertness that is in fault, our carelessness of excellence, our willing ignorance of the treasures that lie in our national heritage, while we are agape after what is foreign, though it may be only a vile imitation of what is native.

This marring of our speech, however, is a minor evil compared with what must follow from the predominance of wealth-acquiring immigrants, whose appreciation of our political and social life must often be as approximative or fatally erroneous as their delivery of our language. But take the worst issues—what can we do to hinder them? Are we to adopt the exclusiveness for which we have punished the Chinese? Are we to tear the glorious flag of hospitality which has made our freedom the world-wide blessing of the oppressed? It is not agreeable to find foreign accents and stumbling locutions passing from the piquant exception to the general rule of discourse. But to urge on that account that we should spike away the peaceful foreigner, would be a view of international relations not in the long run favorable to the interests of our fellow-countrymen; for we are at least equal to the races we call obtrusive in the disposition to settle wherever money is to be made and cheaply idle living to be found. In meeting the national evils which are brought upon us by the onward course of the world, there is often no more immediate hope or recourse than that of striving after fuller national excellence, which must consist in the moulding of more excellent individual natives. The tendency of things is toward the quicker or slower fusion of races. It is impossible to arrest this tendency: all we can do is to moderate its course so as to hinder it from degrading the moral status of societies by a too rapid effacement of those national traditions and customs which are the language of the national genius—the deep suckers of healthy sentiment. Such moderating and guidance of inevitable movement is worthy of all effort. And it is in this sense that the modern insistence on the idea of nationalities has value. That any people at once distinct and coherent enough to form a state should be held in subjection by an alien antipathetic government has been becoming more and more a ground of sympathetic indignation; and in virtue of this, at least one great State has been added to European councils. Nobody now complains of the result in this case, though far-sighted persons see the need to limit analogy by discrimination. We have to consider who are the stifled people and who the stiflers before we

can be sure of our ground. The only point in this connection on which Englishmen are agreed is, that England itself shall not be subject to foreign rule. The fiery resolve to resist invasion, though with an improvised array of pitchforks, is felt to be virtuous, and to be worthy of a historic people. Why? Because there is a national life in our veins. Because there is something specifically English which we feel to be supremely worth striving for, worth dying for, rather than living to renounce it. Because we too have our share — perhaps a principal share — in that spirit of separateness which has not yet done its work in the education of mankind, which has created the varying genius of nations, and, like the Muses, is the offspring of memory.

Here, as everywhere else, the human task seems to be the discerning and adjustment of opposite claims. But the end can hardly be achieved by urging contradictory reproaches, and instead of laboring after discernment as a preliminary to intervention, letting our zeal burst forth according to a capricious selection, first determined accidentally and afterward justified by personal predilection. Not only John Gilpin and his wife, or Edwin and Angelina, seem to be of opinion that their preference or dislike of Russians, Servians, or Greeks, consequent, perhaps, on hotel adventures, has something to do with the merits of the Eastern question; even in a higher range of intellect and enthusiasm we find a distribution of sympathy or pity for sufferers of different blood or votaries of differing religions, strangely unaccountable on any other ground than a fortuitous direction of study or trivial circumstances of travel. With some even admirable persons, one is never quite sure of any particular being included under a general term. A provincial physician, it is said, once ordering a lady patient not to eat salad, was asked pleadingly by the affectionate husband whether she might eat lettuce, or cresses, or radishes. The physician had too rashly believed in the comprehensiveness of the word "salad," just as we, if not enlightened by experience, might believe in the all-embracing breadth of "sympathy with the injured and oppressed." What mind can exhaust the grounds of exception which lie in each particular case? There is understood to be a peculiar odor from the negro body, and we know that some persons, too rationalistic to feel bound by the curse on Ham, used to hint very

strongly that this odor determined the question on the side of negro slavery.

And this is the usual level of thinking in polite society concerning the Jews. Apart from theological purposes, it seems to be held surprising that anybody should take an interest in the history of a people whose literature has furnished all our devotional language; and if any reference is made to their past or future destinies some hearer is sure to state as a relevant fact which may assist our judgment, that she, for her part, is not fond of them, having known a Mr. Jacobson who was very unpleasant, or that he, for his part, thinks meanly of them as a race, though on inquiry you find that he is so little acquainted with their characteristics that he is astonished to learn how many persons whom he has blindly admired and applauded are Jews to the backbone. Again, men who consider themselves in the very van of modern advancement, knowing history and the latest philosophies of history, indicate their contemptuous surprise that any one should entertain the destiny of the Jews as a worthy subject, by referring to Moloch and their own agreement with the theory that the religion of Jehovah was merely a transformed Moloch-worship, while in the same breath they are glorifying "civilization" as a transformed tribal existence of which some lineaments are traceable in grim marriage customs of the native Australians. Are these erudite persons prepared to insist that the name "Father" should no longer have any sanctity for us, because in their view of likelihood our Aryan ancestors were mere improvers on a state of things in which nobody knew his own father?

For less theoretic men, ambitious to be regarded as practical politicians, the value of the Hebrew race has been measured by their unfavorable opinion of a prime minister who is a Jew by lineage. But it is possible to form a very ugly opinion as to the scrupulousness of Walpole, or of Chatham; and in any case I think Englishmen would refuse to accept the character and doings of those eighteenth century statesmen as the standard of value for the English people and the part they have to play in the fortunes of mankind.

If we are to consider the future of the Jews at all, it seems reasonable to take as a preliminary question: Are they destined to complete fusion with the peoples among whom they are dispersed, losing every remnant of a distinctive consciousness as Jews; or, are there in the breadth

and intensity with which the feeling of separateness, or what we may call the organized memory of a national consciousness, actually exists in the world-wide Jewish communities—the seven millions scattered from east to west—and again, are there in the political relations of the world, the conditions present or approaching for the restoration of a Jewish state planted on the old ground as a centre of national feeling, a source of dignifying protection, a special channel for special energies which may contribute some added form of national genius, and an added voice in the councils of the world?

They are among us everywhere; it is useless to say we are not fond of them. Perhaps we are not fond of proletaries and their tendency to form Unions, but the world is not therefore to be rid of them. If we wish to free ourselves from the inconveniences that we have to complain of, whether in proletaries or in Jews, our best course is to encourage all means of improving these neighbors who elbow us in a thickening crowd, and of sending their incommodious energies into beneficent channels. Why are we so eager for the dignity of certain populations of whom perhaps we have never seen a single specimen, and of whose history, legend or literature we have been contentedly ignorant for ages, while we sneer at the notion of a renovated national dignity for the Jews, whose ways of thinking and whose very verbal forms are on our lips in every prayer which we end with an amen? Some of us consider this question dismissed when they have said that the wealthiest Jews have no desire to forsake their European palaces, and go to live in Jerusalem. But in a return from exile, in the restoration of a people, the question is not whether certain rich men will choose to remain behind, but whether there will be found worthy men who will choose to lead the return. Plenty of prosperous Jews remained in Babylon when Ezra marshaled his band of forty thousand and began a new glorious epoch in the history of his race, making the preparation for that epoch in the history of the world which has been held glorious enough to be dated from forevermore. The hinge of possibility is simply the existence of an adequate community of feeling as well as widespread need in the Jewish race, and the hope that among its finer specimens there may arise some men of instruction and ardent public spirit, some new Ezras, some modern Maccabees, who will know how to use all favoring outward conditions, how to

triumph by heroic example over the indifference of their fellows and the scorn of their foes, and will steadfastly set their faces toward making their people once more one among the nations.

Formerly, evangelical orthodoxy was prone to dwell on the fulfillment of prophecy in the "restoration of the Jews." Such interpretation of the prophets is less in vogue now. The dominant mode is to insist on a Christianity that disowns its origin, that is not a substantial growth having a genealogy, but is a vaporous reflex of modern notions. The Christ of Matthew had the heart of a Jew—"Go ye first to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The Apostle of the Gentiles had the heart of a Jew: "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came." Modern apostles, extolling Christianity, are found using a different tone: they prefer the mediæval cry translated into modern phrase. But the mediæval cry, too, was in substance very ancient—more ancient than the days of Augustus. Pagans in successive ages said, "These people are unlike us, and refuse to be made like us: let us punish them." The Jews were steadfast in their separateness, and through that separateness Christianity was born. A modern book on Liberty has maintained that from the freedom of individual men to persist in idiosyncracies the world may be enriched. Why should we not apply this argument to the idiosyncrasy of a nation, and pause in our haste to hoot it down? There is still a great function for the steadfastness of the Jew: not that he should shut out the utmost illumination which knowledge can throw on his national history, but that he should cherish the store of inheritance which that history has left him. Every Jew should be conscious that he is one of a multitude possessing common objects of piety in the immortal achievements and immortal sorrows of ancestors who have transmitted to them a physical and mental type strong enough, eminent enough in faculties, pregnant enough with peculiar promise, to constitute a new beneficent individuality among the nations, and, by confuting the traditions of scorn, nobly avenge the wrongs done to their Fathers.

There is a sense in which the worthy child of a nation that has brought forth illustrious prophets, high and unique among the poets of the world, is bound by their visions.

Is bound?

Yes, for the effective bond of human action is feeling, and the worthy child of a people owning the triple name of Hebrew, Israelite, and Jew, feels his kinship with the glories and the sorrows, the degradation and the possible renovation of his national family.

Will any one teach the nullification of this feeling and call his doctrine a philosophy? He will teach a blinding superstition—the superstition that a theory of human well-being can be constructed in disregard of the influences which have made us human.

THE END.

THE LEGEND OF JUBAL

AND

OTHER POEMS, OLD AND NEW.

THE LEGEND OF JUBAL.

When Cain was driven from Jehovah's land
He wandered eastward, seeking some far strand
Ruled by kind gods who asked no offerings
Save pure field-fruits, as aromatic things,
To feed the subtler sense of frames divine
That lived on fragrance for their food and wine:
Wild joyous gods, who winked at faults and folly,
And could be pitiful and melancholy.
He never had a doubt that such gods were;
He looked within, and saw them mirrored there.
Some think he came at last to Tartary,
And some to Ind; but, howsoe'er it be,
His staff he planted where sweet waters ran,
And in that home of Cain the Arts began.

Man's life was spacious in the early world:
It paused, like some slow ship with sail unfurled
Waiting in seas by scarce a wavelet curled;
Beheld the slow star-paces of the skies,
And grew from strength to strength through centuries;
Saw infant trees fill out their giant limbs,
And heard a thousand times the sweet birds' marriage
hymns.

In Cain's young city none had heard of Death
Save him, the founder; and it was his faith
That here, away from harsh Jehovah's law,
Man was immortal, since no halt or flaw
In Cain's own frame betrayed six hundred years,
But dark as pines that autumn never sears
His locks thronged backward as he ran, his frame
Rose like the orbèd sun each morn the same,
Lake-mirrored to his gaze; and that red brand,
The scorching impress of Jehovah's hand,
Was still clear-edged to his unwearied eye,
Its secret firm in time-fraught memory.

He said, "My happy offspring shall not know
That the red life from out a man may flow
When smitten by his brother." True, his race
Bore each one stamped upon his new-born face
A copy of the brand no whit less clear;
But every mother held that little copy dear.

Thus generations in glad idlesse throve,
Nor hunted prey, nor with each other strove;
For clearest springs were plenteous in the land,
And gourds for cups; the ripe fruits sought the hand,
Bending the laden boughs with fragrant gold;
And for their roofs and garments wealth untold
Lay everywhere in grasses and broad leaves:
They labored gently, as a maid who weaves
Her hair in mimic mats, and pauses oft
And strokes across her palm the tresses soft,
Then peeps to watch the poisèd butterfly,
Or little burdened ants that homeward hie.
Time was but leisure to their lingering thought,
There was no need for haste to finish aught;
But sweet beginnings were repeated still
Like infant babblings that no task fulfill;
For love, that loved not change, constrained the simple will.

Till, hurling stones in mere athletic joy,
Strong Lamech struck and killed his fairest boy,
And tried to wake him with the tenderest cries,
And fetched and held before the glazèd eyes
The things they best had loved to look upon;
But never glance or smile or sigh he won.
The generations stood around those twain
Helplessly gazing till their father Cain
Parted the press, and said, "He will not wake;
This is the endless sleep, and we must make
A bed deep down for him beneath the sod;
For know my sons, there is a mighty God
Angry with all man's race, but most with me.
I fled from out His land in vain!—'tis He
Who came and slew the lad, for He has found
This home of ours, and we shall all be bound
By the harsh bands of His most cruel will,
Which any moment may some dear one kill.

Nay, though we live for countless moons, at last
We and all ours shall die like summers past.
This is Jehovah's will, and He is strong,
I thought the way I traveled was too long
For Him to follow me: my thought was vain!
He walks unseen, but leaves a track of pain,
Pale Death His footprint is, and He will come again!"

And a new spirit from that hour came o'er
The race of Cain: soft idlesse was no more
But even the sunshine had a heart of care,
Smiling with hidden dread—a mother fair
Who folding to her breast a dying child
Beams with feigned joy that but makes sadness mild.
Death was now lord of Life, and at his word
Time, vague as air before, new terrors stirred,
With measured wing now audibly arose
Throbbing through all things to some unknown close.
Now glad Content by clutching Haste was torn,
And Work grew eager, and Device was born.
It seemed the light was never loved before,
Now each man said, "'Twill go and come no more."
No budding branch, no pebble from the brook,
No form, no shadow, but new dearness took
From the one thought that life must have an end;
And the last parting now began to send
Diffusive dread through love and wedded bliss,
Thrilling them into finer tenderness.
Then Memory disclosed her face divine,
That like the calm nocturnal lights doth shine
Within the soul, and shows the sacred graves,
And shows the presence that no sunlight craves,
No space, no warmth, but moves among them all;
Gone and yet here, and coming at each call,
With ready voice and eyes that understand,
And lips that ask a kiss, and dear responsive hand.

Thus to Cain's race death was tear-watered seed
Of various life and action-shaping need.
But chief the sons of Lamech felt the stings
Of new ambition, and the force that springs
In passion beating on the shores of fate.
They said, "There comes a night when all too late
The mind shall long to prompt the achieving hand;
The eager thought behind closed portals stand,

And the last wishes to mute lips press
Buried ere death in silent helplessness.
Then while the soul its way with sound can cleave,
And while the arm is strong to strike and heave,
Let soul and arm give shape that will abide
And rule above our graves, and power divide
With that great god of day, whose rays must bend
As we shall make the moving shadows tend.
Come, let us fashion acts that are to be,
When we shall lie in darkness silently,
As our young brother doth, whom yet we see
Fallen and slain, but reigning in our will
By that one image of him pale and still."
For Lamech's sons were heroes of their race:
Jabal, the eldest, bore upon his face
The look of that calm river-god, the Nile,
Mildly secure in power that needs not guile.
But Tubal-Cain was restless as the fire
That glows and spreads and leaps from high to higher
Where'er is aught to seize or to subdue;
Strong as a storm he lifted or o'erthrew,
His urgent limbs like rounded granite grew,
Such granite as the plunging torrent wears
And roaring rolls around through countless years.
But strength that still on movement must be fed,
Inspiring thought of change, devices bred,
And urged his mind through earth and air to rove
For force that he could conquer if he strove,
For lurking forms that might new tasks fulfill
And yield unwilling to his stronger will.
Such Tubal-Cain. But Jubal had a frame
Fashioned to finer senses, which became
A yearning for some hidden soul of things,
Some outward touch complete on inner springs
That vaguely moving bred a lonely pain,
A want that did but stronger grow with gain
Of all good else, as spirits might be sad
For lack of speech to tell us they are glad.

Now Jabal learned to tame the lowing kine,
And from their udders drew the snow-white wine
That stirs the innocent joy, and makes the stream
Of elemental life with fullness teem;
The star-browed calves he nursed with feeding hand,
And sheltered them, till all the little band

Stood mustered gazing at the sunset way
Whence he would come with store at close of day.
He soothed the silly sheep with friendly tone
And reared their staggering lambs that, older grown,
Followed his steps with sense-taught memory;
Till he, their shepherd, could their leader be
And guide them through the pastures as he would,
With sway that grew from ministry of good.
He spread his tents upon the grassy plain
Which, eastward widening like the open main,
Showed the first whiteness 'neath the morning star;
Near him his sister, deft, as women are,
Plied her quick skill in sequence to his thought
Till the hid treasures of the milk she caught
Revealed like pollen 'mid the petals white,
The golden pollen, virgin to the light.
Even the she-wolf with young, on rapine bent,
He caught and tethered in his mat-walled tent,
And cherished all her little sharp-nosed young
Till the small race with hope and terror clung
About his footsteps, till each new-reared brood,
Remoter from the memories of the wood,
More glad discerned their common home with man.
This was the work of Jabal: he began
The pastoral life, and, sire of joys to be,
Spread the sweet ties that bind the family
O'er dear dumb souls that thrilled at man's caress,
And shared his pains with patient helpfulness.

But Tubal-Cain had caught and yoked the fire,
Yoked it with stones that bent the flaming spire
And made it roar in prisoned servitude
Within the furnace, till with force subdued
It changed all forms he willed to work upon,
Till hard from soft, and soft from hard, he won.
The pliant clay he moulded as he would,
And laughed with joy when 'mid the heat it stood
Shaped as his hand had chosen, while the mass
That from his hold, dark, obstinate, would pass,
He drew all glowing from the busy heat,
All breathing as with life that he could beat
With thundering hammer, making it obey
His will creative, like the pale soft clay.
Each day he wrought and better than he planned,
Shape breeding shape beneath his restless hand.

(The soul without still helps the soul within,
And its delf magic ends where we begin.)
Nay, in his dreams his hammer he would wield
And seem to see a myriad types revealed,
Then spring with wondering triumphant cry,
And, lest the inspiring vision should go by,
Would rush to labor with that plastic zeal
Which all the passion of our life can steal
For force to work with. Each day saw the birth
Of various forms which, flung upon the earth,
Seemed harmless toys to cheat the exacting hour,
But were as seeds instinct with hidden power.
The ax, the club, the spikèd wheel, the chain,
Held silently the shrieks and moans of pain;
And near them latent lay in shear and spade,
In the strong bar, the saw, and deep-curved blade,
Glad voices of the hearth and harvest-home,
The social good, and all earth's joy to come.
Thus to mixed ends wrought Tubal; and they say,
Some things he made have lasted to this day;
As, thirty silver pieces that were found
By Noah's children buried in the ground.
He made them from mere hunger of device,
Those small white discs; but they became the price
The traitor Judas sold his Master for;
And men still handling them in peace and war
Catch foul disease, that come as appetite,
And lurks and clings as withering, damning blight.
But Tubal-Cain wot not of treachery,
Nor greedy lust, nor any ill to be,
Save the one ill of sinking into nought,
Banished from action and act-shaping thought.
He was the sire of swift-transforming skill,
Which arms for conquest man's ambitious will;
And round him gladly, as his hammer rung,
Gathered the elders and the growing young:
These handled vaguely and those plied the tools,
Till, happy chance begetting conscious rules,
The home of Cain with industry was rife,
And glimpes of a strong persistent life,
Panting through generations as one breath,
And filling with its soul the blank of death.

Jubal, too, watched the hammer, till his eyes,
No longer following its fall or rise,

Seemed glad with something that they could not see,
But only listened to — some melody,
Wherein dumb longings inward speech had found,
Won from the common store of struggling sound.
Then, as the metal shapes more various grew,
And, hurled upon each other, resonance drew,
Each gave new tones, the revelations dim
Of some external soul that spoke for him:
The hollow vessel's clang, the clash, the boom,
Like light that makes wide spiritual room
And skyey spaces in the spaceless thought,
To Jubal such enlarged passion brought
That love, hope, rage, and all experience,
Were fused in vaster being, fetching thence
Concords and discords, cadences and cries
That seemed from some world-shrouded soul to rise,
Some rapture more intense, some mightier rage,
Some living sea that burst the bounds of man's brief age.

Then with such blissful trouble and glad care
For growth within unborn as mothers bear,
To the far woods he wandered, listening,
And heard the birds their little stories sing
In notes whose rise and fall seemed melted speech —
Melted with tears, smiles, glances — that can reach
More quickly through our frame's deep-winding night,
And without thought raise thought's best fruit, delight.
Pondering, he sought his home again and heard
The fluctuant changes of the spoken word:
The deep remonstrance and the argued want,
Insistent first in close monotonous chant,
Next leaping upward to defiant stand
Or downward beating like the resolute hand;
The mother's call, the children's answering cry,
The laugh's light cataract tumbling from on high;
The suasive repetitions Jabal taught,
That timid browsing cattle homeward brought;
The clear-winged fugue of echoes vanishing;
And through them all the hammer's rhythmic ring.
Jubal sat lonely, all around was dim,
Yet his face glowed with light revealed to him:
For as the delicate stream of odor wakes
The thought-wed sentience and some image makes
From out the mingled fragments of the past,
Finely compact in wholeness that will last,

So streamed as from the body of each sound
Subtler pulsations, swift as warmth, which found
All prisoned germs and all their powers unbound,
Till thought self-luminous flamed from memory,
And in creative vision wandered free.
Then Jubal, standing, rapturous arms upraised,
And on the dark with eager eyes he gazed,
As had some manifested god been there.
It was his thought he saw: the presence fair
Of unachieved achievement, the high task,
The struggling unborn spirit that doth ask
With irresistible cry for blood and breath,
Till feeding its great life we sink in death.

He said, "Were now those mighty tones and cries
That from the giant soul of earth arise,
Those groans of some great travail heard from far,
Some power at wrestle with the things that are,
Those sounds which vary with the varying form
Of clay and metal, and in sightless swarm
Fill the wide space with tremors: were these wed
To human voices with such passion fed
As does but glimmer in our common speech,
But might flame out in tones whose changing reach,
Surpassing meagre need, informs the sense
With fuller union, finer difference—
Were this great vision, now obscurely bright
As morning hills that melt in new-poured light,
Wrought into solid form and living sound,
Moving with ordered throb and sure rebound,
Then——Nay, I Jubal will that work begin!
The generations of our race shall win
New life, that grows from out the heart of this,
As spring from winter, or as lovers' bliss
From out the dull unknown of unwaked energies."

Thus he resolved, and in the soul-fed light
Of coming ages waited through the night,
Watching for that near dawn whose chiller ray
Showed but the unchanged world of yesterday;
Where all the order of his dream divine
Lay like Olympian forms within the mine;
Where fervor that could fill the earthly round
With throngèd joys of form-begotten sound

Must shrink intense within the patient power
That lonely labors through the niggard hour.
Such patience have the heroes who begin,
Sailing the first to lands which others win.
Jubal must dare as great beginners dare.
Strike form's first way in matter rude and bare,
And, yearning vaguely toward the plenteous choir
Of the world's harvest, make one poor small lyre.
He made it, and from out its measured frame
Drew the harmonic soul, whose answers came
With guidance sweet and lessons of delight
Teaching to ear and hand the blissful Right,
Where strictest law is gladness to the sense
And all desire bends toward obedience.

Then Jubal poured his triumph in a song—
The rapturous word that rapturous notes prolong
As radiance streams from smallest things that burn,
Or thought of loving into love doth turn.
And still his lyre gave companionship
In sense-taught concert as of lip with lip.
Alone amid the hills at first he tried
His wingèd song; then with adoring pride
And bridegroom's joy at leading forth his bride,
He said, "This wonder which my soul hath found,
This heart of music in the might of sound,
Shall forthwith be the share of all our race
And like the morning gladden common space:
The song shall spread and swell as rivers do,
And I will teach our youth with skill to woo
This living lyre, to know its secret will,
Its fine division of the good and ill.
So shall men call me sire of harmony,
And where great Song is, there my life shall be.

Thus glorying as a god beneficent,
Forth from his solitary joy he went
To bless mankind. It was at evening,
When shadows lengthen from each westward thing,
When imminence of change makes sense more fine
And light seems holier in its grand decline.
The fruit-trees wore their studded coronal,
Earth and her children were at festival,
Glowing as with one heart and one consent—
Thought, love, trees, rocks, in sweet, warm radiance blent,

The tribe of Cain was resting on the ground,
The various ages wreathed in one broad round.
Here lay, while children peeped o'er his huge thighs,
The sinewy man embrowned by centuries;
Here the broad-bosomed mother of the strong
Looked, like Demeter, placid o'er the throng
Of young, lithe forms whose rest was movement too—
Tricks, prattle, nods; and laughs that lightly flew,
And swayings as of flower-beds where Love blew.
For all had feasted well upon the flesh
Of juicy fruits, on nuts, and honey fresh,
And now their wine was health-bred merriment,
Which through the generations circling went,
Leaving none sad, for even father Cain
Smiled as a Titan might, despising pain.
Jabal sat climbed on by a playful ring
Of children, lambs and whelps, whose gamboling,
With tiny hoofs, paws, hands, and dimpled feet,
Made barks, bleats, laughs, in pretty hubbub meet.
But Tubal's hammer rang from far away,
Tubal alone would keep no holiday,
His furnace must not slack for any feast,
For of all hardship work he counted least;
He scorned all rest but sleep, where every dream
Made his repose more potent action seem.

Yet with health's nectar some strange thirst was blent,
The fateful growth, the unnamed discontent,
The inward shaping toward some unborn power,
Some deeper-breathing act, the being's flower.
After all gestures, words, and speech of eyes,
The soul had more to tell, and broke in sighs.

Then from the east, with glory on his head
Such as low-slanting beams on corn-waves spread,
Came Jubal with his lyre: there 'mid the throng,
Where the blank space was, poured a solemn song,
Touching his lyre to full harmonic throb
And measured pulse, with cadences that sob,
Exult and cry, and search the inmost deep
Where the dark sources of new passion sleep.
Joy took the air, and took each breathing soul,
Embracing them in one entrancèd whole,
Yet thrilled each varying frame to various ends,
As Spring new-waking through the creature sends

Or rage or tenderness; more plenteous life
Here breeding dread, and there a fiercer strife.
He who had lived through twice three centuries,
Whose months monotonous, like trees on trees
In hoary forests, stretched a backward maze,
Dreamed himself dimly through the traveled days
Till in clear light he paused, and felt the sun
That warmed him when he was a little one;
Felt that true heaven, the recovered past,
The dear small Known amid the Unknown vast,
And in that heaven wept. But younger limbs
Thrilled toward the future, that bright land which swims
In western glory, isles and streams and bays,
Where hidden pleasures float in golden haze.
And in all these the rhythmic influence,
Sweetly o'ercharging the delighted sense,
Flowed out in movements, little waves that spread
Enlarging, till in tidal union led
The youths and maidens both alike long-tressed,
By grace-inspiring melody possessed,
Rose in slow dance, with beauteous floating swerve
Of limbs and hair, and many a melting curve
Of ringèd feet swayed by each close-linked palm:
Then Jubal poured more rapture in his psalm,
The dance fired music, music fired the dance,
The glow diffusive lit each countenance,
Till all the gazing elders rose and stood
With glad yet awful shock of that mysterious good.

Even Tubal caught the sound, and wondering came,
Urging his sooty bulk like smoke-wrapt flame
Till he could see his brother with the lyre,
The work for which he lent his furnace-fire
And diligent hammer, witting nought of this—
This power in metal shape which made strange bliss,
Entering within him like a dream full-fraught
With new creations finished in a thought.

The sun had sunk, but music still was there,
And when this ceased, still triumph filled the air:
It seemed the stars were shining with delight
And that no night was ever like this night.
All clung with praise to Jubal: some besought
That he would teach them his new skill; some caught,

Swiftly as smiles are caught in looks that meet,
The tone's melodic change and rhythmic beat:
'Twas easy following where invention trod—
All eyes can see when light flows out from God.

And thus did Jubal to his race reveal
Music their larger soul, where woe and weal
Filling the resonant chords, the song, the dance,
Moved with a wider-wingèd utterance.
Now many a lyre was fashioned, many a song
Raised echoes new, old echoes to prolong,
Till things of Jubal's making were so rife,
"Hearing myself," he said, "hems in my life,
And I will get me to some far-off land,
Where higher mountains under heaven stand
And touch the blue at rising of the stars,
Whose song they hear where no rough mingling mars
The great clear voices. Such lands there must be,
Where varying forms make varying symphony—
Where other thunders roll amid the hills,
Some mightier wind a mightier forest fills
With other strains through other-shapen boughs;
Where bees and birds and beasts that hunt or browse
Will teach me songs I know not. Listening there,
My life shall grow like trees both tall and fair
That rise and spread and bloom toward fuller fruit each
year."

He took a raft, and traveled with the stream
Southward for many a league, till he might deem
He saw at last the pillars of the sky,
Beholding mountains whose white majesty
Rushed through him as new awe, and made new song
That swept with fuller wave the chords along,
Weighting his voice with deep religious chime,
The iteration of slow chant sublime.
It was the region long inhabited
By all the race of Seth; and Jubal said:
"Here have I found my thirsty soul's desire,
Eastward the hills touch heaven, and evening's fire
Flames through deep waters; I will take my rest,
And feed anew from my great mother's breast,
The sky-clasped Earth, whose voices nurture me
As the flowers' sweetness doth the honey-bee."

He lingered wandering for many an age,
And, sowing music, made high heritage
For generations far beyond the Flood—
For the poor late-begotten human brood
Born to life's weary brevity and perilous good.

And ever as he traveled he would climb
The farthest mountain, yet the heavenly chime,
The mighty tolling of the far-off spheres
Beating their pathway, never touched his ears.
But wheresoe'er he rose the heavens rose,
And the far-gazing mountain could disclose
Nought but a wider earth; until one height
Showed him the ocean stretched in liquid light,
And he could hear its multitudinous roar,
Its plunge and hiss upon the pebbled shore:
Then Jubal silent sat, and touched his lyre no more.

He thought, "The world is great, but I am weak,
And where the sky bends is no solid peak
To give me footing, but instead, this main—
Myriads of maddened horses thundering o'er the plain.

"New voices come to me where'er I roam,
My heart too widens with its widening home:
But song grows weaker, and the heart must break
For lack of voice, or fingers that can wake
The lyre's full answer; nay, its chords were all
Too few to meet the growing spirit's call.
The former songs seem little, yet no more
Can soul, hand, voice, with interchanging lore
Tell what the earth is saying unto me:
The secret is too great, I hear confusedly.

"No farther will I travel: once again
My brethren I will see, and that fair plain
Where I and Song were born. There fresh-voiced youth
Will pour my strains with all the early truth
Which now abides not in my voice and hands,
But only in the soul, the will that stands
Helpless to move. My tribe remembering
Will cry 'Tis he!' and run to greet me, welcoming."

The way was weary. Many a date-palm grew,
And shook out clustered gold against the blue,

While Jubal, guided by the steadfast spheres,
Sought the dear home of those first eager years,
When, with fresh vision fed, the fuller will
Took living outward shape in pliant skill;
For still he hoped to find the former things,
And the warm gladness recognition brings.
His footsteps erred among the mazy woods
And long illusive sameness of the floods,
Winding and wandering. Through far regions, strange
With Gentile homes and faces, did he range,
And left his music in their memory,
And left at last, when nought besides would free
His homeward steps from clinging hands and cries,
The ancient lyre. And now in ignorant eyes
No sign remained of Jubal, Lamech's son,
That mortal frame wherein was first begun
The immortal life of song. His withered brow
Pressed over eyes that held no lightning now,
His locks streamed whiteness on the hurrying air,
The unresting soul had worn itself quite bare
Of beauetous token, as the outworn might
Of oaks slow dying, gaunt in summer's light.
His full deep voice toward thinnest treble ran:
He was the rune-writ story of a man.

And so at last he neared the well-known land,
Could see the hills in ancient order stand
With friendly faces whose familiar gaze
Looked through the sunshine of his childish days;
Knew the deep-shadowed folds of hanging woods,
And seemed to see the self-same insect broods
Whirling and quivering o'er the flowers—to hear
The self-same cuckoo making distance near.
Yea, the dear Earth, with mother's constancy,
Met and embraced him, and said, "Thou art he!
This was thy cradle, here my breast was thine,
Where feeding, thou didst all thy life entwine
With my sky-wedded life in heritage divine."

But wending ever through the watered plain,
Firm not to rest save in the home of Cain,
He saw dread Change, with dubious face and cold
That never kept a welcome for the old,
Like some strange heir upon the hearth, arise
Saying "This home is mine." He thought his eyes

Mocked all deep memories, as things new made,
Usurping sense, make old things shrink and fade
And seem ashamed to meet the staring day.
His memory saw a small foot-trodden way,
His eyes a broad far-stretching paven road
Bordered with many a tomb and fair abode;
The little city that once nestled low
As buzzing groups about some central glow,
Spread like a murmuring crowd o'er plain and steep,
Or monster huge in heavy-breathing sleep.
His heart grew faint, and tremblingly he sank
Close by the wayside on a weed-grown bank,
Not far from where a new-raised temple stood,
Sky-roofed, and fragrant with wrought cedar wood.
The morning sun was high; his rays fell hot
On this hap-chosen, dusty, common spot,
On the dry-withered grass and withered man:
That wondrous frame where melody began
Lay as a tomb defaced that no eye cared to scan.

But while he sank far music reached his ear.
He listened until wonder silenced fear
And gladness wonder; for the broadening stream
Of sound advancing was his early dream,
Brought like fulfillment of forgotten prayer;
As if his soul, breathed out upon the air,
Had held the invisible seeds of harmony
Quick with the various strains of life to be.
He listened: the sweet mingled difference
With charm alternate took the meeting sense;
Then bursting like some shield-broad lily red,
Sudden and near the trumpet's notes out-spread,
And soon his eyes could see the metal flower,
Shining upturned, out on the morning pour
Its incense audible; could see a train
From out the street slow-winding on the plain
With lyres and cymbals, flutes and psalteries,
While men, youths, maids, in concert sang to these
With various throat, or in succession poured,
Or in full volume mingled. But one word
Ruled each recurrent rise and answering fall,
As when the multitudes adoring call
On some great name divine, their common soul,
The common need, love, joy, that knits them in one whole.

The word was "Jubal!"——"Jubal" filled the air
And seemed to ride aloft, a spirit there,
Creator of the choir, the full-fraught strain
That grateful rolled itself to him again.
The aged man adust upon the bank—
Whom no eye saw—at first with rapture drank
The bliss of music, then, with swelling heart,
Felt, this was his own being's greater part,
The universal joy once born in him.
But when the train, with living face and limb
And vocal breath, came nearer and more near,
The longing grew that they should hold him dear;
Him, Lamech's son, whom all their fathers knew,
The breathing Jubal—him, to whom their love was due.

All was forgotten but the burning need
To claim his fuller self, to claim the deed
That lived away from him, and grew apart,
While he as from a tomb, with lonely heart,
Warmed by no meeting glance, no hand that pressed,
Lay chill amid the life his life had blessed.
What though his song should spread from man's small race
Out through the myriad worlds that people space,
And make the heavens one joy-diffusing choir?—
Still 'mid that vast would throb the keen desire
Of this poor aged flesh, this eventide,
This twilight soon in darkness to subside,
This little pulse of self that, having glowed
Through thrice three centuries, and divinely strowed
The light of music through the vague of sound,
Ached with its smallness still in good that had no bound.

For no eye saw him, while with loving pride
Each voice with each in praise of Jubal vied.
Must he in conscious trance, dumb, helpless lie
While all that ardent kindred passed him by?
His flesh cried out to live with living men
And join that soul which to the inward ken
Of all the hymning train was present there.
Strong passion's daring sees not aught to dare:
The frost-locked starkness of his frame low-bent,
His voice's penury of tones long spent,
He felt not; all his being leaped in flame
To meet his kindred as they onward came

Slackening and wheeling toward the temple's face:
He rushed before them to the glittering space,
And, with a strength that was but strong desire,
Cried, "I am Jubal, I!——I made the lyre!"
The tones amid a lake of silence fell
Broken and strained, as if a feeble bell
Had tuneless pealed the triumph of a land
To listening crowds in expectation spanned.
Sudden came showers of laughter on that lake;
They spread along the train from front to wake
In one great storm of merriment, while he
Shrank doubting whether he could Jubal be,
And not a dream of Jubal, whose rich vein
Of passionate music came with that dream-pain
Wherein the sense slips off from each loved thing
And all appearance is mere vanishing.
But ere the laughter died from out the rear,
Anger in front saw profanation near;
Jubal was but a name in each man's faith
For glorious power untouched by that slow death
Which creeps with creeping time; this too, the spot,
And this the day, it must be crime to blot,
Even with scoffing at a madman's lie:
Jubal was not a name to wed with mockery.

Two rushed upon him: two, the most devout
In honor of great Jubal, thrust him out,
And beat him with their flutes. 'Twas little need;
He strove not, cried not, but with tottering speed,
As if the scorn and howls were driving wind
That urged his body, serving so the mind
Which could but shrink and yearn, he sought the screen
Of thorny thickets, and there fell unseen.
The immortal name of Jubal filled the sky,
While Jubal lonely laid him down to die.
He said within his soul, "This is the end:
O'er all the earth to where the heavens bend
And hem men's travel, I have breathed my soul:
I lie here now the remnant of that whole,
The embers of a life, a lonely pain;
As far-off rivers to my thirst were vain,
So of my mighty years nought comes to me again.

"Is the day sinking? Softest coolness springs
From something round me: dewy shadowy wings

Enclose me all around—no, not above—
Is moonlight there? I see a face of love,
Fair as sweet music when my heart was strong:
Yea—art thou come again to me, great song?"

The face bent over him like silver night
In long-remembered summers; that calm light
Of days which shine in firmaments of thought,
That past unchangeable, from change still wrought.
And gentlest tones were with the vision blent:
He knew not if that gaze the music sent,
Or music that calm gaze: to hear, to see,
Was but one undivided ecstacy:
The raptured senses melted into one,
And parting life a moment's freedom won
From in and outer, as a little child
Sits on a bank and sees blue heavens mild
Down in the water, and forgets its limbs,
And knoweth nought save the blue heaven that swims.

"Jubal," the face said, "I am thy loved Past,
The soul that makes thee one from first to last.
I am the angel of thy life and death,
Thy outbreathed being drawing its last breath.
Am I not thine alone, a dear dead bride
Who blest thy lot above all men's beside?
Thy bride whom thou wouldst never change, nor take
Any bride living, for that dead one's sake?
Was I not all thy yearning and delight,
Thy chosen search, thy senses' beauteous Right,
Which still had been the hunger of thy frame
In central heaven, hadst thou been still the same?
Wouldst thou have asked aught else from any god—
Whether with gleaming feet on earth he trod
Or thundered through the skies—aught else for share
Of mortal good, than in thy soul to bear
The growth of song, and feel the sweet unrest
Of the world's spring-tide in thy conscious breast?
No, thou hadst grasped thy lot with all its pain,
Nor loosed it any painless lot to gain
Where music's voice was silent; for thy fate
Was human music's self incorporate:
Thy senses' keenness and thy passionate strife
Were flesh of *her* flesh and her womb of life.

And greatly hast thou lived, for not alone
With hidden raptures were her secrets shown,
Buried within thee, as the purple light
Of gems may sleep in solitary night;
But thy expanding joy was still to give,
And with the generous air in song to live,
Feeding the wave of ever-widening bliss
Where fellowship means equal perfectness.
And on the mountains in thy wandering
Thy feet were beautiful as blossomed spring,
That turns the leafless wood to love's glad home,
For with thy coming Melody was come.
This was thy lot, to feel, create, bestow,
And that immeasurable life to know
From which the fleshly self falls shriveled, dead,
A seed primeval that has forests bred.
It is the glory of the heritage
Thy life has left, that makes thy outcast age:
Thy limbs shall lie dark, tombless on this sod,
Because thou shinest in man's soul, a god,
Who found and gave new passion and new joy
That nought but Earth's destruction can destroy.
Thy gifts to give was thine of men alone:
'Twas but in giving that thou couldst atone
For too much wealth amid their poverty."—

The words seemed melting into symphony,
The wings upbore him, and the gazing song
Was floating him the heavenly space along,
Where mighty harmonies all gently fell
Through veiling vastness, like the far-off bell,
Till, ever onward through the choral blue,
He heard more faintly and more faintly knew,
Quitting mortality, a quenched sun-wave,
The All-creating Presence for his grave.

AGATHA.

COME with me to the mountain, not where rocks
Soar harsh above the troops of hurrying pines,
But where the earth spreads soft and rounded breasts
To feed her children; where the generous hills
Lift a green isle betwixt the sky and plain
To keep some Old World things aloof from change.
Here too 'tis hill and hollow: new-born streams
With sweet enforcement, joyously compelled
Like laughing children, hurry down the steeps,
And make a dimpled chase athwart the stones;
Pine woods are black upon the heights, the slopes
Are green with pasture, and the bearded corn
Fringes the blue above the sudden ridge:
A little world whose round horizon cuts
This isle of hills with heaven for a sea,
Save in clear moments when southwestward gleams
France by the Rhine, melting anon to haze.
The monks of old chose here their still retreat,
And called it by the Blessed Virgin's name,
Sancta Maria, which the peasant's tongue,
Speaking from out the parent's heart that turns
All loved things into little things, has made
Sanct Märgen—Holy little Mary, dear
As all the sweet home things she smiles upon,
The children and the cows, the apple-trees,
The cart, the plough, all named with that caress
Which feigns them little, easy to be held,
Familiar to the eyes and hand and heart.
What though a queen? She puts her crown away
And with her little Boy wears common clothes,
Caring for common wants, remembering
That day when good Saint Joseph left his work
To marry her with humble trust sublime.
The monks are gone, their shadows fall no more
Tall-frocked and cowled athwart the evening fields
At milking-time; their silent corridors
Are turned to homes of bare-armed, aproned men
Who toil for wife and children. But the bells

Pealing on high from two quaint convent towers,
Still ring the catholic signals, summoning
To grave remembrance of the larger life
That bears our own, like perishable fruit
Upon its heaven-wide branches. At their sound
The shepherd boy far off upon the hill,
The workers with the saw and at the forge,
The triple generation round the hearth,—
Grandames and mothers and the flute-voiced girls,—
Fall on their knees and send forth prayerful cries
To the kind Mother with the little Boy,
Who pleads for helpless men against the storm,
Lightning and plagues and all terrific shapes
Of power supreme.
Within the prettiest hollows of these hills,
Just as you enter it, upon the slope
Stands a low cottage neighbored cheerily
By running water, which, at farthest end
Of the same hollow, turns a heavy mill,
And feeds the pastures for the miller's cows,
Blanchi and Nägeli, Veilchen and the rest,
Matrons with faces as Griselda mild,
Coming at call. And on the farthest height
A little tower looks out above the pines
Where mounting you will find a sanctuary
Open and still ; without, the silent crowd,
Of heaven, planted, incense-mingling flowers ;
Within the altar where the Mother sits
'Mid votive tablets hung from far-off years
By peasants succored in the peril of fire,
Fever, or flood, who thought that Mary's love,
Willing but not omnipotent, had stood
Between their lives and that dread power which slew
Their neighbor at their side. The chapel bell
Will melt to gentlest music ere it reach
That cottage on the slope, whose garden gate
Has caught the rose-tree boughs and stands ajar ;
So does the door, to let the sunbeams in ;
For in the slanting sunbeams angels come
And visit Agatha who dwells within,—
Old Agatha, whose cousins Kate and Nell
Are housed by her in Love and Duty's name,
They being feeble, with small withered wits,
And she believing that the higher gift
Was given to be shared. So Agatha

Shares her one room, all neat on afternoons,
As if some memory were sacred there
And everything within the four low walls
An honored relic.
One long summer's day
An angel entered at the rose-hung gate,
With skirts pale blue, a brow to quench the pearl,
Hair soft and blonde as infants', plenteous
As hers who made the wavy lengths once speak
The grateful worship of a rescued soul.
The angel paused before the open door
To give good-day. "Come in," said Agatha.
I followed close, and watched and listened there.
The angel was a lady, noble, young,
Taught in all seemliness that fits a court,
All lore that shapes the mind to delicate use,
Yet quiet, lowly, as a meek white dove
That with its presence teaches gentleness,
Men called her Countess Linda; little girls
In Freiburg town, orphans whom she caressed,
Said Mamma Linda: yet her years were few,
Her outward beauties all in budding time,
Her virtues the aroma of the plant
That dwells in all its being, root, stem, leaf,
And waits not ripeness.
"Sit," said Agatha.
Her cousins were at work in neighboring homes
But yet she was not lonely; all things round
Seemed filled with noiseless yet responsive life,
As of a child at breast that gently clings:
Not sunlight only or the breathing flowers
Or the swift shadows of the birds and bees,
But all the household goods, which, polished fair
By hands that cherished them for service done,
Shone as with glad content. The wooden beams
Dark and yet friendly, easy to be reached,
Bore three white crosses for a speaking sign.
The walls had little pictures hung a-row,
Telling the stories of Saint Ursula,
And Saint Elizabeth, the lowly queen;
And on the bench that served for table too,
Skirting the wall to save the narrow space,
There lay the Catholic books, inherited
From those old times when printing still was young
With stout-limbed promise, like a sturdy boy.

And in the farthest corner stood the bed
Where o'er the pillow hung two pictures wreathed
With fresh-plucked ivy: one the Virgin's death,
And one her flowering tomb, while high above
She smiling bends and lets her girdle down
For ladder to the soul that cannot trust
In life which outlasts burial. Agatha
Sat at her knitting, aged, upright, slim,
And spoke her welcome with mild dignity.
She kept the company of kings and queens
And mitred saints who sat below the feet
Of Francis with the ragged frock and wounds;
And Rank for her meant Duty, various,
Yet equal in its worth, done worthily.
Command was service; humblest service done
By willing and discerning souls was glory.
Fair Countess Linda sat upon the bench,
Close fronting the old knitter, and they talked
With sweet antiphony of young and old.

AGATHA.

You like our valley, lady? I am glad
You thought it well to come again. But rest—
The walk is long from Master Michael's inn.

COUNTESS LINDA.

Yes, but no walk is prettier.

AGATHA.

It is true:
There lacks no blessing here, the waters all
Have virtues like the garments of the Lord,
And heal much sickness; then, the crops and cows
Flourish past speaking, and the garden flowers,
Pink, blue, and purple, 'tis a joy to see
How they yield honey for the singing bees.
I would the whole world were as good a home.

COUNTESS LINDA.

And you are well off, Agatha?—your friends
Left you a certain bread: is it not so?

AGATHA.

Not so at all, dear lady. I had nought,
Was a poor orphan; but I came to tend
Here in this house, an old afflicted pair,
Who wore out slowly; and the last who died,
Full thirty years ago, left me this roof
And all the household stuff. It was great wealth;
And so I had a home for Kate and Nell.

COUNTESS LINDA.

But how, then, have you earned your daily bread
These thirty years?

AGATHA.

O, that is easy earning.
We help the neighbors, and our bit and sup
Is never failing: they have work for us
In house and field, all sorts of odds and ends,
Patching and mending, turning o'er the hay,
Holding sick children,—there is always work;
And they are very good,—the neighbors are.
Weigh not our bits of work with weight and scale,
But glad themselves with giving us good shares
Of meat and drink; and in the big farm-house
When cloth comes home from weaving, the good wife
Cuts me a piece,—this very gown,—and says:
"Here, Agatha, you old maid, you have time
To pray for Hans who is gone soldiering:
The saints might help him, and they have much to do,
'Twere well they were besought to think of him."
She spoke half jesting, but I pray, I pray
For poor young Hans. I take it much to heart
That other people are worse off than I,—
I ease my soul with praying for them all.

COUNTESS LINDA.

That is your way of singing, Agatha;
Just as the nightingales pour forth sad songs,
And when they reach men's ears they make men's hearts
Feel the more kindly.

AGATHA.

Nay, I cannot sing:
My voice is hoarse, and oft I think my prayers
Are foolish, feeble things; for Christ is good
Whether I pray or not,—the Virgin's heart
Is kinder far than mine; and then I stop
And feel I can do nought toward helping men,
Till out it comes, like tears that will not hold,
And I must pray again for all the world.
'Tis good to me,—I mean the neighbors are:
To Kate and Nell too. I have money saved
To go on pilgrimage the second time.

COUNTESS LINDA.

And do you mean to go on pilgrimage
With all your years to carry, Agatha?

AGATHA.

The years are light, dear lady: 'tis my sins
Are heavier than I would. And I shall go
All the way to Einsiedeln with that load:
I need to work it off.

COUNTESS LINDA.

What sort of sins,
Dear Agatha? I think they must be small.

AGATHA.

Nay, but they may be greater than I know;
'Tis but dim light I see by. So I try
All ways I know of to be cleansed and pure.
I would not sink where evil spirits are.
There's perfect goodness somewhere: so I strive.

COUNTESS LINDA.

You were the better for that pilgrimage
You made before? The shrine is beautiful;
And then you saw fresh country all the way.

AGATHA.

Yes, that is true. And ever since that time
The world seems greater, and the Holy Church
More wonderful. The blessed pictures all,
The heavenly images with books and wings,
Are company to me through the day and night.
The time! the time! It never seemed far back,
Only to father's father and his kin
That lived before him. But the time stretched out
After that pilgrimage: I seemed to see
Far back, and yet I knew time lay behind,
As there are countries lying still behind
The highest mountains, there in Switzerland.
O, it is great to go on pilgrimage!

COUNTESS LINDA.

Perhaps some neighbors will be pilgrims too,
And you can start together in a band.

AGATHA.

Not from these hills: people are busy here,
The beasts want tendance. One who is not missed
Can go and pray for others who must work.
I owe it to all neighbors, young and old;
For they are good past thinking,—lads and girls
Given to mischief, merry naughtiness,
Quiet it, as the hedgehogs smooth their spines,
For fear of hurting poor old Agatha.
'Tis pretty: why, the cherubs in the sky
Look young and merry, and the angels play
On citherns, lutes, and all sweet instruments.
I would have young things merry. See the Lord!
A little baby playing with the birds;
And how the Blessed Mother smiles at him.

COUNTESS LINDA.

I think you are too happy, Agatha,
To care for heaven. Earth contents you well.

AGATHA.

Nay, nay, I shall be called, and I shall go
Right willingly. I shall get helpless, blind,

Be like an old stalk to be plucked away:
The garden must be cleared for young spring plants.
'Tis home beyond the grave, the most are there,
All those we pray to, all the Church's lights,—
And poor old souls are welcome in their rags:
One sees it by the pictures. Good Saint Ann,
The Virgin's mother, she is very old,
And had her troubles with her husband too.
Poor Kate and Nell are younger far than I,
But they will have this roof to cover them.
I shall go willingly; and willingness
Makes the yoke easy and the burden light.

COUNTESS LINDA.

When you go southward in your pilgrimage,
Come to see me in Freiberg, Agatha.
Where you have friends you should not go to inns.

AGATHA.

Yes, I will gladly come to see you, lady.
And you will give me sweet hay for a bed,
And in the morning I shall wake betimes
And start when all the birds begin to sing.

COUNTESS LINDA.

You wear your smart clothes on the pilgrimage,
Such pretty clothes as all the women here
Keep by them for their best: a velvet cap
And collar golden-broidered? They look well
On old and young alike.

AGATHA.

Nay, I have none,—
Never had better clothes than these you see.
Good clothes are pretty, but one sees them best
When others wear them, and I somehow thought
'Twas not worth while. I had so many things
More than some neighbors, I was partly shy
Of wearing better clothes than they, and now
I am so old and custom is so strong
'Twould hurt me sore to put on finery.

COUNTESS LINDA.

Your gray hair is a crown, dear Agatha.
Shake hands; good-bye. The sun is going down,
And I must see the glory from the hill.
I stayed among those hills; and oft heard more
Of Agatha. I liked to hear her name,
As that of one half grandame and half saint,
Uttered with reverent playfulness. The lads
And younger men all called her mother, aunt,
Or granny, with their pet diminutives,
And bade their lasses and their brides behave
Right well to one who surely made a link
'Twixt faulty folk and God by loving both:
Not one but counted service done by her,
Asking no pay save just her daily bread.
At feasts and weddings, when they passed in groups
Along the vale, and the good country wine,
Being vocal in them, made them choir along
In quaintly mingled mirth and piety,
They fain must jest and play some friendly trick
On three old maids; but when the moment came
Always they bated breath and made their sport
Gentle as feather-stroke, that Agatha
Might like the waking for the love it showed.
Their song made happy music 'mid the hills,
For nature tuned their race to harmony,
And poet Hans, the tailor, wrote them songs
That grew from out their life, as crocuses
From out the meadow's moistness. 'Twas his song
They oft sang, wending homeward from a feast,—
The song I give you. It brings in, you see,
Their gentle jesting with the three old maids.

Midnight by the chapel bell!
Homeward, homeward all, farewell!
I with you, and you with me,
Miles are short with company.
Heart of Mary, bless the way,
Keep us all by night and day!

Moon and stars at feast with night
Now have drunk their fill of light.

Home they hurry, making time
Trot apace, like merry rhyme.
Heart of Mary, mystic rose,
Send us all a sweet repose!

Swiftly through the wood down hill,
Run till you can hear the mill.
Toni's ghost is wandering now,
Shaped just like a snow-white cow.
Heart of Mary, morning star,
Ward off danger, near or far!

Toni's wagon with its load
Fell and crushed him in the road
'Twixt these pine-trees. Never fear!
Give a neighbor's ghost good cheer.
Holy Babe, our God and Brother,
Bind us fast to one another!

Hark! the mill is at its work,
Now we pass beyond the murk
To the hollow, where the moon
Makes her silvery afternoon.
Good Saint Joseph, faithful spouse,
Help us all to keep our vows!

Here the three old maidens dwell,
Agatha and Kate and Nell;
See, the moon shines on the thatch,
We will go and shake the latch.
Heart of Mary, cup of joy,
Give us mirth without alloy!

Hush, 'tis here, no noise, sing low,
Rap with gentle knuckles—so!
Like the little tapping birds,
On the door; then sing good words.
Meek Saint Anna, old and fair,
Hallow all the snow-white hair!

Little maidens old, sweet dreams!
Sleep one sleep till morning beams.
Mothers ye, who help us all,
Quick at hand, if ill befall.
Holy Gabriel, lily-laden,
Bless the aged mother-maiden!

Forward, mount the broad hillside
Swift as soldiers when they ride.
See the two towers how they peep,
Round-capped giants, o'er the steep.
Heart of Mary, by thy sorrow,
Keep us upright through the morrow!

Now they rise quite suddenly
Like a man from bended knee,
Now Saint Märgen is in sight,
Here the roads branch off—good-night!
Heart of Mary, by thy grace,
Give us with the saints a place!

ARMGART.

SCENE I.

A Salon lit with lamps and ornamented with green plants. An open piano, with many scattered sheets of music. Bronze busts of Beethoven and Gluck on pillars opposite each other. A small table spread with supper. To FRÄULEIN WALPURGA, *who advances with a slight lameness of gait from an adjoining room, enters* GRAF DORNBURG *at the opposite door in a traveling dress.*

GRAF.

Good morning, Fräulein!

WALPURGA.

What, so soon returned?
I feared your mission kept you still at Prague.

GRAF.

But now arrived! You see my traveling dress.
I hurried from the panting, roaring steam
Like any courier of embassy
Who hides the fiends of war within his bag.

WALPURGA.

You know that Armgart sings to-night?

GRAF.

Has sung!
'Tis close on half-past nine. The *Orpheus*
Lasts not so long. Her spirits—were they high?
Was Leo confident?

WALPURGA.

He only feared
Some tameness at beginning. Let the house
Once ring, he said, with plaudits, she is safe.

GRAF.

And Armgart?

WALPURGA.

She was stiller than her wont.
But once, at some such trivial word of mine,
As that the highest prize might yet be won
By her who took the second—she was roused.
"For me," she said, "I triumph or I fail.
I never strove for any second prize."

GRAF.

Poor human-hearted singing-bird! She bears
Cæsar's ambition in her delicate breast,
And nought to still it with but quivering song.

WALPURGA.

I had not for the world been there to-night;
Unreasonable dread oft chills me more
Than any reasonable hope can warm.

GRAF.

You have a rare affection for your cousin;
As tender as a sister's.

WALPURGA.

Nay, I fear
My love is little more than what I felt
For happy stories when I was a child.
She fills my life that would be empty else,
And lifts my nought to value by her side.

GRAF.

She is reason good enough, or seems to be,
Why all were born whose being ministers
To her completeness. Is it most her voice
Subdues us? or her instinct exquisite,
Informing each old strain with some new grace
Which takes our sense like any natural good?
Or most her spiritual energy
That sweeps us in the current of her song?

WALPURGA.

I know not. Losing either, we should lose
That whole we call our Armgart. For herself,
She often wonders what her life had been
Without that voice for channel to her soul.
She says, it must have leaped through all her limbs—
Made her a Mænad—made her snatch a brand
And fire some forest, that her rage might mount
In crashing roaring flames through half a land,
Leaving her still and patient for a while.
"Poor wretch!" she says, of any murderess—
"The world was cruel, and she could not sing:
I carry my revenges in my throat;
I love in singing, and am loved again."

GRAF.

Mere mood! I cannot yet believe it more.
Too much ambition has unwomaned her;
But only for a while. Her nature hides
One half its treasures by its very wealth,
Taxing the hours to show it.

WALPURGA.

Hark! she comes.

Enter LEO *with a wreath in his hand, holding the door open for* ARMGART, *who wears a furred mantle and hood. She is followed by her maid, carrying an armful of bouquets.*

LEO.

Place for the queen of song!

GRAF (*advancing toward* ARMGART, *who throws off her hood and mantle, and shows a star of brilliants in her hair.*)

A triumph, then.
You will not be a niggard of your joy
And chide the eagerness that came to share it.

ARMGART.

O kind! you hastened your return for me.
I would you had been there to hear me sing!

Walpurga, kiss me; never tremble more
Lest Armgart's wings should fail her. She has found
This night the region where her rapture breathes—
Pouring her passion on the air made live
With human heart-throbs. Tell them, Leo, tell them
How I outsang your hope and made you cry
Because Gluck could not hear me. That was folly!
He sang, not listened; every linkèd note
Was his immortal pulse that stirred in mine,
And all my gladness is but part of him.
Give me the wreath.

[*She crowns the bust of* GLUCK.

LEO (*sardonically*).

Ay, ay, but mark you this:
It was not part of him—that trill you made
In spite of me and reason!

ARMGART.

You were wrong—
Dear Leo, you were wrong; the house was held
As if a storm were listening with delight
And hushed its thunder.

LEO.

Will you ask the house
To teach you singing? Quit your *Orpheus*, then,
And sing in farces grown to operas,
Where all the prurience of the full-fed mob
Is tickled with melodic impudence;
Jerk forth burlesque bravuras, square your arms
Akimbo with a tavern wench's grace,
And set the splendid compass of your voice
To lyric jigs. Go to! I thought you meant
To be an artist—lift your audience
To see your vision, not trick forth a show
To please the grossest taste of grossest numbers.

ARMGART (*taking up* LEO'S *hand and kissing it*).

Pardon, good Leo, I am penitent.
I will do penance; sing a hundred trills
Into a deep-dug grave, then burying them
As one did Midas' secret, rid myself

Of naughty exultation. O I trilled
At nature's prompting, like the nightingales.
Go scold them, dearest Leo.

LEO.

I stop my ears.
Nature in Gluck inspiring Orpheus,
Has done with nightingales. Are bird-beaks lips?

GRAF.

Truce to rebukes! Tell us—who were not there—
The double drama; how the expectant house
Took the first notes.

WALPURGA (*turning from her occupation of decking the room with the flowers*).

Yes, tell us all, dear Armgart.
Did you feel tremors? Leo, how did she look?
Was there a cheer to greet her?

LEO.

Not a sound.
She walked like Orpheus in his solitude,
And seemed to see nought but what no man saw.
'Twas famous. Not the Schroeder-Devrient
Had done it better. But your blessed public
Had never any judgment in cold blood—
Thinks all perhaps were better otherwise.
Till rapture brings a reason.

ARMGART (*scornfully*).

I knew that!
The women whispered, "Not a pretty face!"
The men, "Well, well, a goodly length of limb:
She bears the chiton."—It were all the same
Were I the Virgin Mother and my stage
The opening heavens at the Judgment-day:
Gossips would peep, jog elbows, rate the price
Of such a woman in the social mart.
What were the drama of the world to them,
Unless they felt the hell-prong?

LEO.

Peace, now, peace!
I hate my phrases to be smothered o'er
With sauce of paraphrase, my sober tune
Made bass to rambling trebles, showering down
In endless demi-semi-quavers.

ARMGART (*taking a bon-bon from the table, uplifting it before putting it into her mouth, and turning away*).

Mum!

GRAF.

Yes, tell us all the glory, leave the blame.

WALPURGA.

You first, dear Leo — what you saw and heard;
Then Armgart — she must tell us what she felt.

LEO.

Well! The first notes came clearly firmly forth.
And I was easy, for behind those rills
I knew there was a fountain. I could see
The house was breathing gently, heads were still;
Parrot opinion was struck meekly mute,
And human hearts were swelling. Armgart stood
As if she had been new-created there
And found her voice which found a melody.
The minx! Gluck had not written, nor I taught:
Orpheus was Armgart, Armgart Orpheus.
Well, well, all through the *scena* I could feel
The silence tremble now, now poise itself
With added weight of feeling, till at last
Delight o'er-toppled it. The final note
Had happy drowning in the unloosed roar
That surged and ebbed and ever surged again,
Till expectation kept it pent awhile
Ere Orpheus returned. Pfui! He was changed:
My demi-god was pale, had downcast eyes
That quivered like a bride's who fain would send
Backward the rising tear.

ARMGART (*advancing, but then turning away, as if to check her speech*).

I *was* a bride,
As nuns are at their spousals.

LEO.

Ay, my lady,
That moment will not come again: applause
May come and plenty; but the first, first draught!
(*Snaps his fingers.*)
Music has sounds for it—I know no words.
I felt it once myself when they performed
My overture to Sintram. Well! 'tis strange,
We know not pain from pleasure in such joy.

ARMGART (*turning quickly*).

Oh, pleasure has cramped dwelling in our souls,
And when full Being comes must call on pain
To lend it liberal space.

WALPURGA.

I hope the house
Kept a reserve of plaudits: I am jealous
Lest they had dulled themselves for coming good
That should have seemed the better and the best.

LEO.

No, 'twas a revel where they had but quaffed
Their opening cup. I thank the artist's star,
His audience keeps not sober: once afire,
They flame toward climax, though his merit hold
But fairly even.

ARMGART (*her hand on* LEO'S *arm*).

Now, now, confess the truth:
I sang still better to the very end—
All save the trill; I give that up to you,
To bite and growl at. Why, you said yourself,
Each time I sang, it seemed new doors were oped
That you might hear heaven clearer.

LEO (*shaking his finger*).

I was raving.

ARMGART.

I am not glad with that mean vanity
Which knows no good beyond its appetite
Full feasting upon praise! I am only glad,
Being praised for what I know is worth the praise;
Glad of the proof that I myself have part
In what I worship! At the last applause —
Seeming a roar of tropic winds that tossed
The handkerchiefs and many-colored flowers,
Falling like shattered rainbows all around —
Think you I felt myself a *prima donna?*
No, but a happy spiritual star
Such as old Dante saw, wrought in a rose
Of light in Paradise, whose only self
Was consciousness of glory wide-diffused,
Music, life, power — I moving in the midst
With a sublime necessity of good.

LEO (*with a shrug*).

I thought it was a *prima donna* came
Within the side-scenes; ay, and she was proud
To find the bouquet from the royal box
Enclosed a jewel-case, and proud to wear
A star of brilliants, quite an earthly star,
Valued by thalers. Come, my lady, own
Ambition has five senses, and a self
That gives it good warm lodging when it sinks
Plump down from ecstasy.

ARMGART.

Own it? why not?
Am I a sage whose words must fall like seed
Silently buried toward a far-off spring?
I sing to living men and my effect
Is like the summer's sun, that ripens corn
Or now or never. If the world brings me gifts,
Gold, incense, myrrh — 'twill be the needful sign
That I have stirred it as the high year stirs
Before I sink to winter.

GRAF.

Ecstasies
Are short — most happily! We should but lose
Were Armgart borne too commonly and long

Out of the self that charms us. Could I choose,
She were less apt to soar beyond the reach
Of woman's foibles, innocent vanities,
Fondness for trifles like that pretty star
Twinkling beside her cloud of ebon hair.

ARMGART (*taking out the gem and looking at it*).

This little star! I would it were the seed
Of a whole Milky Way, if such bright shimmer
Were the sole speech men told their rapture with
At Armgart's music. Shall I turn aside
From splendors which flash out the glow I make,
And live to make, in all the chosen breasts
Of half a Continent? No, may it come,
That splendor! May the day be near when men
Think much to let my horses draw me home,
And new lands welcome me upon their beach,
Loving me for my fame. That is the truth
Of what I wish, nay, yearn for. Shall I lie?
Pretend to seek obscurity — to sing
In hope of disregard? A vile pretense!
And blasphemy besides. For what is fame
But the benignant strength of One, transformed
To joy of Many? Tributes, plaudits come
As necessary breathing of such joy;
And may they come to me!

GRAF.

The auguries
Point clearly that way. Is it no offense
To wish the eagle's wing may find repose,
As feebler wings do in a quiet nest?
Or has the taste of fame already turned
The Woman to a Muse ——

LEO (*going to the table*).

Who needs no supper?
I am her priest, ready to eat her share
Of good Walpurga's offerings.

WALPURGA.

Armgart, come.
Graf, will you come?

GRAF.

Thanks, I play truant here,
And must retrieve my self-indulged delay.
But will the Muse receive a votary
At any hour to-morrow?

ARMGART.

Any hour
After rehearsal, after twelve at noon.

SCENE II.

The same salon, morning. ARMGART *seated, in her bonnet and walking dress. The* GRAF *standing near her against the piano.*

GRAF.

Armgart, to many minds the first success
Is reason for desisting. I have known
A man so versatile, he tried all arts.
But when in each by turns he had achieved
Just so much mastery as made men say,
"He could be king here if he would," he threw
The lauded skill aside. He hates, said one,
The level of achieved pre-eminence,
He must be conquering still; but others said ——

ARMGART.

The truth, I hope: he had a meagre soul,
Holding no depth where love could root itself.
"Could if he would?" True greatness ever wills—
It lives in wholeness if it live at all,
And all its strength is knit with constancy.

GRAF.

He used to say himself he was too sane
To give his life away for excellence
Which yet must stand, an ivory statuette

Wrought to perfection through long lonely years,
Huddled in the mart of mediocrities.
He said, the very finest doing wins
The admiring only; but to leave undone,
Promise and not fulfill, like buried youth,
Wins all the envious, makes them sigh your name
As that fair Absent, blameless Possible,
Which could alone impassion them; and thus,
Serene negation has free gift of all,
Panting achievement struggles, is denied,
Or wins to lose again. What say you, Armgart?
Truth has rough flavors if we bite it through;
I think this sarcasm came from out its core
Of bitter irony.

ARMGART.

It is the truth
Mean souls select to feed upon. What then?
Their meanness is a truth, which I will spurn.
The praise I seek lives not in envious breath
Using my name to blight another's deed.
I sing for love of song and that renown
Which is the spreading act, the world-wide share,
Of good that I was born with. Had I failed—
Well, that had been a truth most pitiable.
I cannot bear to think what life would be
With high hope shrunk to endurance, stunted aims
Like broken lances ground to eating-knives,
A self sunk down to look with level eyes
At low achievement, doomed from day to day
To distaste of its consciousness. But I ——

GRAF.

Have won, not lost, in your decisive throw.
And I too glory in this issue; yet,
The public verdict has no potency
To sway my judgment of what Armgart is:
My pure delight in her would be but sullied,
If it o'erflowed with mixture of men's praise.
And had she failed, I should have said, "The pearl
Remains a pearl for me, reflects the light
With the same fitness that first charmed my gaze—
Is worth as fine a setting now as then."

ARMGART (*rising*).

Oh, you are good! But why will you rehearse
The talk of cynics, who with insect eyes
Explore the secrets of the rubbish-heap?
I hate your epigrams and pointed saws
Whose narrow truth is but broad falsity.
Confess your friend was shallow.

GRAF.

I confess
Life is not rounded in an epigram,
And saying aught, we leave a world unsaid.
I quoted, merely to shape forth my thought
That high success has terrors when achieved—
Like preternatural spouses whose dire love
Hangs perilous on slight observances:
Whence it were possible that Armgart crowned
Might turn and listen to a pleading voice,
Though Armgart striving in the race was deaf.
You said you dared not think what life had been
Without the stamp of eminence; have you thought
How you will bear the poise of eminence
With dread of sliding? Paint the future out
As an unchecked and glorious career,
'Twill grow more strenuous by the very love
You bear to excellence, the very fate
Of human powers, which tread at every step
On possible verges.

ARMGART.

I accept the peril.
I choose to walk high with sublimer dread
Rather than crawl in safety. And, besides,
I am an artist as you are noble:
I ought to bear the burden of my rank.

GRAF.

Such parallels, dear Armgart, are but snares
To catch the mind with seeming argument—
Small baits of likeness 'mid disparity.
Men rise the higher as their task is high,
The task being well achieved. A woman's rank
Lies in the fullness of her womanhood:
Therein alone she is royal.

ARMGART.

Yes, I know
The oft-taught Gospel: "Woman, thy desire
Shall be that all superlatives on earth
Belong to men, save the one highest kind—
To be a mother. Thou shalt not desire
To do aught best save pure subservience:
Nature has willed it so!" O blessed Nature!
Let her be arbitress; she gave me voice
Such as she only gives a woman child,
Best of its kind, gave me ambition too,
That sense transcendent which can taste the joy
Of swaying multitudes, of being adored
For such achievement, needed excellence,
As man's best art must wait for, or be dumb.
Men did not say, when I had sung last night,
"'Twas good, nay, wonderful, considering
She is a woman"—and then turn to add,
"Tenor or baritone had sung her songs
Better, of course: she's but a woman spoiled."
I beg your pardon, Graf, you said it.

GRAF.

No!
How should I say it, Armgart? I who own
The magic of your nature-given art
As sweetest effluence of your womanhood
Which, being to my choice the best, must find
The best of utterance. But this I say:
Your fervid youth beguiles you; you mistake
A strain of lyric passion for a life
Which in the spending is a chronicle
With ugly pages. Trust me, Armgart, trust me;
Ambition exquisite as yours which soars
Toward something quintessential you call fame,
Is not robust enough for this gross world
Whose fame is dense with false and foolish breath.
Ardor, a-twin with nice refining thought,
Prepares a double pain. Pain had been saved,
Nay, purer glory reached, had you been throned
As woman only, holding all your art
As attribute to that dear sovereignty—
Concentering your power in home delights
Which penetrate and purify the world.

ARMGART.

What! leave the opera with my part ill-sung
While I was warbling in a drawing-room?
Sing in the chimney-corner to inspire
My husband reading news? Let the world hear
My music only in his morning speech
Less stammering than most honorable men's?
No! tell me that my song is poor, my art
The piteous feat of weakness aping strength—
That were fit proem to your argument.
Till then, I am an artist by my birth—
By the same warrant that I am a woman:
Nay, in the added rarer gift I see
Supreme vocation: if a conflict comes,
Perish—no, not the woman, but the joys
Which men make narrow by their narrowness
Oh, I am happy! The great masters write
For women's voices, and great Music wants me!
I need not crush myself within a mold
Of theory called Nature: I have room
To breathe and grow unstunted.

GRAF.

Armgart, hear me.
I meant not that our talk should hurry on
To such collision. Foresight of the ills
Thick shadowing your path, drew on my speech
Beyond intention. True, I came to ask
A great renunciation, but not this
Toward which my words at first perversely strayed,
As if in memory of their earlier suit,
Forgetful ——
Armgart, do you remember too? the suit
Had but postponement, was not quite disdained—
Was told to wait and learn—what it has learned—
A more submissive speech.

ARMGART (*with some agitation*).

Then it forgot
Its lesson cruelly. As I remember,
'Twas not to speak save to the artist crowned,
Nor speak to her of casting off her crown.

GRAF.

Nor will it, Armgart. I come not to seek
Any renunciation save the wife's,
Which turns away from other possible love
Future and worthier, to take his love
Who asks the name of husband. He who sought
Armgart obscure, and heard her answer, "Wait"—
May come without suspicion now to seek
Armgart applauded.

ARMGART (*turning toward him*).

Yes, without suspicion
Of aught save what consists with faithfulness
In all expressed intent. Forgive me, Graf—
I am ungrateful to no soul that loves me—
To you most grateful. Yet the best intent
Grasps but a living present which may grow
Like any unfledged bird. You are a noble,
And have a high career; just now you said
'Twas higher far than aught a woman seeks
Beyond mere womanhood. You claim to be
More than a husband, but could not rejoice
That I were more than wife. What follows, then?
You choosing me with such persistency
As is but stretched-out rashness, soon must find
Our marriage asks concessions, asks resolve
To share renunciation or demand it.
Either we both renounce a mutual ease,
As in a nation's need both man and wife
Do public services, or one of us
Must yield that something else for which each lives
Besides the other. Men are reasoners:
That premise of superior claims perforce
Urges conclusion—"Armgart, it is you."

GRAF.

But if I say I have considered this
With strict prevision, counted all the cost
Which that great good of loving you demands—
Questioned my stores of patience, half resolved
To live resigned without a bliss whose threat
Touched you as well as me—and finally,
With impetus of undivided will

Returned to say, "You shall be free as now;
Only accept the refuge, shelter, guard,
My love will give your freedom"—then your words
Are hard accusal.

ARMGART.

Well, I accuse myself.
My love would be accomplice of your will.

GRAF.

Again—my will?

ARMGART.

Oh, your unspoken will.
Your silent tolerance would torture me,
And on that rack I should deny the good
I yet believed in.

GRAF.

Then I am the man
Whom you would love?

ARMGART.

Whom I refuse to love!
No; I will live alone and pour my pain
With passion into music, where it turns
To what is best within my better self.
I will not take for husband one who deems
The thing my soul acknowledges as good—
The thing I hold worth striving, suffering for,
To be a thing dispensed with easily,
Or else the idol of a mind infirm.

GRAF.

Armgart, you are ungenerous; you strain
My thought beyond its mark. Our difference
Lies not so deep as love—as union
Through a mysterious fitness that transcends
Formal agreement.

ARMGART.

It lies deep enough
To chafe the union. If many a man

Refrains, degraded, from the utmost right,
Because the pleadings of his wife's small fears
Are little serpents biting at his heel,—
How shall a woman keep her steadfastness
Beneath a frost within her husband's eyes
Where coldness scorches? Graf, it is your sorrow
That you love Armgart. Nay, it is her sorrow
That she may not love you.

GRAF.

Woman, it seems,
Has enviable power to love or not
According to her will.

ARMGART.

She has the will—
I have—who am one woman—not to take
Disloyal pledges that divide her will.
The man who marries me must wed my Art—
Honor and cherish it, not tolerate.

GRAF.

The man is yet to come whose theory
Will weigh as nought with you against his love.

ARMGART.

Whose theory will plead beside his love.

GRAF.

Himself a singer, then? who knows no life
Out of the opera books, where tenor parts
Are found to suit him?

ARMGART.

You are bitter, Graf.
Forgive me; seek the woman you deserve,
All grace, all goodness, who has not yet found
A meaning in her life, nor any end
Beyond fulfilling yours. The type abounds.

GRAF.

And happily, for the world.

ARMGART.

Yes, happily.
Let it excuse me that my kind is rare:
Commonness is its own security.

GRAF.

Armgart, I would with all my soul I knew
The man so rare that he could make your life
As woman sweet to you, as artist safe.

ARMGART.

Oh, I can live unmated, but not live
Without the bliss of singing to the world,
And feeling all my world respond to me.

GRAF.

May it be lasting. Then, we two must part?

ARMGART.

I thank you from my heart for all. Farewell!

SCENE III.

A YEAR LATER.

The same Salon. WALPURGA *is standing looking toward the window with an air of uneasiness.* DOCTOR GRAHN.

DOCTOR.

Where is my patient, Fräulein?

WALPURGA.

Fled! escaped!
Gone to rehearsal. Is it dangerous?

DOCTOR.

No, no; her throat is cured. I only came
To hear her try her voice. Had she yet sung?

WALPURGA.

No; she had meant to wait for you. She said,
"The Doctor has a right to my first song."
Her gratitude was full of little plans,
But all were swept away like gathered flowers
By sudden storm. She saw this opera bill—
It was a wasp to sting her: she turned pale,
Snatched up her hat and mufflers, said in haste,
'I go to Leo—to rehearsal—none
Shall sing Fidelio to-night but me!'
Then rushed down-stairs.

DOCTOR (*looking at his watch*).

And this, not long ago?

WALPURGA.

Barely an hour.

DOCTOR.

I will come again,
Returning from Charlottenburg at one.

WALPURGA.

Doctor, I feel a strange presentiment.
Are you quite easy?

DOCTOR.

She can take no harm.
'Twas time for her to sing: her throat is well.
It was a fierce attack, and dangerous;
I had to use strong remedies, but—well!
At one, dear Fräulein, we shall meet again.

SCENE IV.

Two Hours Later.

Walpurga *starts up, looking toward the door.* Armgart *enters, followed by* Leo. *She throws herself on a chair which stands with its back toward the door, speechless, not seeming to see anything.* Walpurga *casts a questioning terrified look at* Leo. *He shrugs his shoulders, and lifts up his hands behind* Armgart, *who sits like a helpless image, while* Walpurga *takes off her hat and mantle.*

Walpurga.

Armgart, dear Armgart (*kneeling and taking her hands*), only speak to me,
Your poor Walpurga. Oh, your hands are cold.
Clasp mine, and warm them! I will kiss them warm.

(Armgart *looks at her an instant, then draws away her hands, and, turning aside, buries her face against the back of the chair,* Walpurga *rising and standing near.*)

(Doctor Grahn *enters.*)

Doctor.

News! stirring news to-day! wonders come thick.

Armgart (*starting up at the first sound of his voice, and speaking vehemently.*)

Yes, thick, thick, thick! and you have murdered it!
Murdered my voice—poisoned the soul in me,
And kept me living.
You never told me that your cruel cures
Were clogging films—a mouldy, dead'ning blight—
A lava-mud to crust and bury me,
Yet hold me living in a deep, deep tomb,
Crying unheard forever! Oh, your cures
Are devil's triumphs: you can rob, maim, slay,
And keep a hell on the other side your cure
Where you can see your victim quivering

Between the teeth of torture—see a soul
Made keen by loss—all anguish with a good
Once known and gone! (*Turns and sinks back on her chair.*)
O misery, misery!
You might have killed me, might have let me sleep
After my happy day and wake—not here!
In some new unremembered world—not here,
Where all is faded, flat—a feast broke off—
Banners all meaningless—exulting words
Dull, dull—a drum that lingers in the air
Beating to melody which no man hears.

DOCTOR (*after a moment's silence*).

A sudden check has shaken you, poor child!
All things seem livid, tottering to your sense,
From inward tumult. Stricken by a threat
You see your terrors only. Tell me, Leo:
'Tis not such utter loss.

(LEO, *with a shrug, goes quietly out.*)

The freshest bloom
Merely, has left the fruit; the fruit itself——

ARMGART.

Is ruined, withered, is a thing to hide
Away from scorn or pity. Oh, you stand
And look compassionate now, but when Death came
With mercy in his hands, you hindered him.
I did not choose to live and have your pity.
You never told me, never gave me choice
To die a singer, lightning-struck, unmaimed,
Or live what you would make me with your cures—
A self accursed with consciousness of change,
A mind that lives in nought but members lopped,
A power turned to pain—as meaningless
As letters fallen asunder that once made
A hymn of rapture. O, I had meaning once,
Like day and sweetest air. What am I now?
The millionth woman in superfluous herds.
Why should I be, do, think? 'Tis thistle-seed,
That grows and grows to feed the rubbish-heap.
Leave me alone!

DOCTOR.

Well, I will come again;
Send for me when you will, though but to rate me.
That is medicinal—a letting blood.

ARMGART.

Oh, there is one physician, only one,
Who cures and never spoils. Him I shall send for;
He comes readily.

DOCTOR (*to* WALPURGA).

One word, dear Fräulein.

SCENE V.

ARMGART, WALPURGA.

ARMGART.

Walpurga, have you walked this morning?

WALPURGA.

No.

ARMGART.

Go, then, and walk; I wish to be alone.

WALPURGA.

I will not leave you.

ARMGART.

Will not, at my wish?

WALPURGA.

Will not, because you wish it. Say no more,
But take this draught.

ARMGART.

The Doctor gave it you?
It is an anodyne. Put it away.
He cured me of my voice, and now he wants
To cure me of my vision and resolve—
Drug me to sleep that I may wake again
Without a purpose, abject as the rest
To bear the yoke of life. He shall not cheat me
Of that fresh strength which anguish gives the soul,
The inspiration of revolt, ere rage
Slackens to faltering. Now I see the truth.

WALPURGA (*setting down the glass*).

Then you must see a future in your reach,
With happiness enough to make a dower
For two of modest claims.

ARMGART.

Oh, you intone
That chant of consolation wherewith ease
Makes itself easier in the sight of pain.

WALPURGA.

No; I would not console you, but rebuke.

ARMGART.

That is more bearable. Forgive me, dear.
Say what you will. But now I want to write.
(*She rises and moves toward a table.*)

WALPURGA.

I say then, you are simply fevered, mad;
You cry aloud at horrors that would vanish
If you would change the light, throw into shade
The loss you aggrandize, and let day fall
On good remaining, nay on good refused
Which may be gain now. Did you not reject
A woman's lot more brilliant, as some held,
Than any singer's? It may still be yours.
Graf Dornberg loved you well.

ARMGART.

Not me, not me.
He loved one well who was like me in all
Save in a voice which made that All unlike
As diamond is to charcoal. Oh, a man's love!
Think you he loves a woman's inner self
Aching with loss of loveliness?—as mothers
Cleave to the palpitating pain that dwells
Within their misformed offspring?

WALPURGA.

But the Graf
Chose you as simple Armgart—had preferred
That you should never seek for any fame
But such as matrons have who rear great sons
And therefore you rejected him; but now

ARMGART.

Ay, now—now he would see me as I am.
(*She takes up a hand-mirror.*)
Russet and songless as a missel-thrush.
An ordinary girl—a plain brown girl,
Who, if some meaning flash from out her words,
Shocks as a disproportioned thing—a Will
That, like an arm astretch and broken off,
Has nought to hurl—the torso of a soul.
I sang him into love of me: my song
Was consecration, lifted me apart
From the crowd chiseled like me, sister forms,
But empty of divineness. Nay, my charm
Was half that I could win fame yet renounce!
A wife with glory possible absorbed
Into her husband's actual.

WALPURGA.

For shame!
Armgart, you slander him. What would you say
If now he came to you and asked again
That you would be his wife?

ARMGART.

No, and thrice no!
It would be pitying constancy, not love,
That brought him to me now. I will not be

A pensioner in marriage. Sacraments
Are not to feed the paupers of the world.
If he were generous—I am generous too.

WALPURGA.

Proud, Armgart, but not generous.

ARMGART.

Say no more.
He will not know until—

WALPURGA.

He knows already.

ARMGART (*quickly*).

Is he come back?

WALPURGA.

Yes, and will soon be here.
The Doctor had twice seen him and would go
From hence again to see him.

ARMGART.

Well, he knows.
It is all one.

WALPURGA.

What if he were outside?
I hear a footstep in the ante-room.

ARMGART (*raising herself and assuming calmness*).

Why let him come, of course. I shall behave
Like what I am, a common personage
Who looks for nothing but civility.
I shall not play the fallen heroine.
Assume a tragic part and throw out cues
For a beseeching lover.

WALPURGA.

Some one raps.
(*Goes to the door.*)
A letter—from the Graf.

ARMGART.

Then open it.
(WALPURGA *still offers it.*)
Nay, my head swims. Read it. I cannot see.
(WALPURGA *opens it, reads and pauses.*)
Read it. Have done! No matter what it is.

WALPURGA (*reads in a low, hesitating voice*).

"I am deeply moved—my heart is rent, to hear of your illness and its cruel results, just now communicated to me by Dr. Grahn. But surely it is possible that this result may not be permanent. For youth such as yours, Time may hold in store something more than resignation: who shall say that it does not hold renewal? I have not dared to ask admission to you in the hours of a recent shock, but I cannot depart on a long mission without tendering my sympathy and my farewell. I start this evening for the Caucasus, and thence I proceed to India, where I am intrusted by the Government with business which may be of long duration."

(WALPURGA *sits down dejectedly.*)

ARMGART (*after a slight shudder, bitterly*).

The Graf has much discretion. I am glad.
He spares us both a pain, not seeing me.
What I like least is that consoling hope—
That empty cup, so neatly ciphered "Time,"
Handed me as a cordial for despair.
(*Slowly and dreamily*) Time—what a word to fling as Charity!
Bland neutral word for slow, dull-beating pain—
Days, months, and years!—If I would wait for them.

(*She takes up her hat and puts it on, then wraps her mantle round her.* (WALPURGA *leaves the room.*)

Why, this is but beginning. (WALP. *re-enters.*) Kiss me, dear.
I am going now—alone—out—for a walk.
Say you will never wound me any more
With such cajolery as nurses use
To patients amorous of a crippled life,
Flatter the blind: I see.

WALPURGA.

Well, I was wrong.
In haste to soothe, I snatched at flickers merely.
Believe me, I will flatter you no more.

ARMGART.

Bear witness, I am calm. I read my lot
As soberly as if it were a tale
Writ by a creeping feuilletonist and called
"The Woman's Lot: a Tale of Everyday":
A middling woman's, to impress the world
With high superfluousness; her thoughts a crop
Of chick-weed errors or of pot-herb facts,
Smiled at like some child's drawing on a slate.
"Genteel?" "O yes, gives lessons; not so good
As any man's would be, but cheaper far."
"Pretty?" "No; yet she makes a figure fit
For good society. Poor thing, she sews
Both late and early, turns and alters all
To suit the changing mode. Some widower
Might do well, marrying her; but in these days!——
Well, she can somewhat eke her narrow gains
By writing, just to furnish her with gloves
And droschkies in the rain. They print her things
Often for charity."—Oh, a dog's life!
A harnessed dog's, that draws a little cart
Voted a nuisance! I am going now.

WALPURGA.

Not now, the door is locked.

ARMGART.

Give me the key!

WALPURGA.

Locked on the outside. Gretchen has the key:
She is gone on errands.

ARMGART.

What, you dare to keep me
Your prisoner?

WALPURGA.

And have I not been yours?
Your wish has been a bolt to keep me in.
Perhaps that meddling woman whom you paint
With far-off scorn——

ARMGART.

I paint what I must be!
What is my soul to me without the voice
That gave it freedom?—gave it one grand touch
And made it nobly human?—Prisoned now,
Prisoned in all the petty mimicries
Called woman's knowledge, that will fit the world
As doll-clothes fit a man. I can do nought
Better than what a million women do—
Must drudge among the crowd and feel my life
Beating upon the world without response,
Beating with passion through an insect's horn
That moves a millet-seed laboriously.
If I *would* do it!

WALPURGA (*coldly*).

And why should you not?

ARMGART (*turning quickly*).

Because Heaven made me royal—wrought me out
With subtle finish toward pre-eminence,
Made every channel of my soul converge
To one high function, and then flung me down,
That breaking I might turn to subtlest pain.
An inborn passion gives a rebel's right:
I would rebel and die in twenty worlds
Sooner than bear the yoke of thwarted life,
Each keenest sense turned into keen distaste,
Hunger not satisfied but kept alive
Breathing in languor half a century.
All the world now is but a rack of threads
To twist and dwarf me into pettiness
And basely feigned content, the placid mask
Of woman's misery

WALPURGA (*indignantly*).

Ay, such a mask
As the few born like you to easy joy,
Cradled in privilege, take for natural
On all the lowly faces that must look
Upward to you! What revelation now
Shows you the mask or gives presentiment
Of sadness hidden? You who every day
These five years saw me limp to wait on you
And thought the order perfect which gave *me*,
The girl without pretension to be aught,
A splendid cousin for my happiness:
To watch the night through when her brain was fired
With too much gladness—listen, always listen
To what *she* felt, who having power had right
To feel exorbitantly, and submerge
The souls around her with the poured-out flood
Of what must be ere she were satisfied!
That was feigned patience, was it? Why not love,
Love nurtured even with that strength of self
Which found no room save in another's life?
Oh, such as I know joy by negatives,
And all their deepest passion is a pang
Till they accept their pauper's heritage,
And meekly live from out the general store
Of joy they were born stripped of. I accept—
Nay, now would sooner choose it than the wealth
Of natures you call royal, who can live
In mere mock knowledge of their fellows' woe,
Thinking their smiles may heal it.

ARMGART (*tremulously*).

Nay, Walpurga,
I did not make a palace of my joy
To shut the world's truth from me. All my good
Was that I touched the world and made a part
In the world's dower of beauty, strength and bliss;
It was the glimpse of consciousness divine
Which pours out day, and sees the day is good.
Now I am fallen dark; I sit in gloom,
Remembering bitterly. Yet you speak truth;
I wearied you, it seems; took all your help
As cushioned nobles use a weary serf,
Not looking at his face.

WALPURGA.

Oh, I but stand
As a small symbol for the mighty sum
Of claims unpaid to needy myriads;
I think you never set your loss beside
That mighty deficit. Is your work gone—
The prouder queenly work that paid itself
And yet was overpaid with men's applause?
Are you no longer chartered, privileged,
But sunk to simple woman's penury,
To ruthless Nature's chary average—
Where is the rebel's right for you alone?
Noble rebellion lifts a common load;
But what is he who flings his own load off
And leaves his fellows toiling? Rebel's right?
Say rather, the deserter's. Oh, you smiled
From your clear height on all the million lots
Which yet you brand as abject.

ARMGART.

I was blind
With too much happiness; true vision comes
Only, it seems, with sorrow. Were there one
This moment near me, suffering what I feel,
And needing me for comfort in her pang—
Then it were worth the while to live; not else.

WALPURGA.

One—near you—why, they throng! you hardly stir
But your act touches them. We touch afar.
For did not swarthy slaves of yesterday
Leap in their bondage at the Hebrews' flight,
Which touch them through the thrice millennial dark?
But you can find the sufferer you need
With touch less subtle.

ARMGART.

Who has need of me?

WALPURGA.

Love finds the need it fills. But you are hard.

ARMGART.

Is it not you, Walpurga, who are hard?
You humored all my wishes till to-day,
When fate has blighted me.

WALPURGA.

You would not hear
The "chant of consolation"; words of hope
Only embittered you. Then hear the truth—
A lame girl's truth, whom no one ever praised
For being cheerful. "It is well," they said:
"Were she cross-grained she could not be endured."
A word of truth from her had startled you;
But you—you claimed the universe; nought less
Than all existence working in sure tracks
Toward your supremacy. The wheels might scathe
A myriad destinies—nay, must perforce;
But yours they must keep clear of; just for you
The seething atoms through the firmament
Must bear a human heart—which you had not!
For what is it to you that women, men,
Plod, faint, are weary, and espouse despair
Of aught but fellowship? Save that you spurn
To be among them? Now, then, you are lame—
Maimed, as you said, and leveled with the crowd:
Call it new birth—birth from that monstrous Self
Which, smiling down upon a race oppressed,
Says, "All is good, for I am throned at ease."
Dear Armgart—nay, you tremble—I am cruel.

ARMGART.

O no! hark! Some one knocks. Come in!—come in!
(*Enter* LEO.)

LEO.

See, Gretchen let me in. I could not rest
Longer away from you.

ARMGART.

Sit down, dear Leo.
Walpurga, I would speak with him alone.
(WALPURGA *goes out.*)

LEO (*hesitatingly*).

You mean to walk?

ARMGART.

No, I shall stay within.
(*She takes off her hat and mantle, and sits down immediately. After a pause, speaking in a subdued tone to* LEO.)
How old are you?

LEO.

Threescore and five.

ARMGART.

That's old.
I never thought till now how you have lived.
They hardly ever play your music?

LEO (*raising his eyebrows and throwing out his lip*).

No!
Schubert too wrote for silence: half his work
Lay like a frozen Rhine till summers came
That warmed the grass above him. Even so!
His music lives now with a mighty youth.

ARMGART.

Do you think yours will live when you are dead?

LEO.

Pfui! The time was, I drank that home-brewed wine.
And found it heady, while my blood was young:
Now it scarce warms me. Tipple it as I may,
I am sober still, and say: "My old friend Leo,
Much grain is wasted in the world and rots;
Why not thy handful?"

ARMGART.

Strange! since I have known you
Till now I never wondered how you live.
When I sang well—that was your jubilee.
But you were old already.

LEO.

Yes, child, yes:
Youth thinks itself the goal of each old life;
Age has but traveled from a far-off time
Just to be ready for youth's service. Well!
It was my chief delight to perfect you.

ARMGART.

Good Leo! You have lived on little joys.
But your delight in me is crushed forever.
Your pains, where are they now? They shaped intent.
Which action frustrates; shaped an inward sense
Which is but keen despair, the agony
Of highest vision in the lowest pit.

LEO.

Nay, nay, I have a thought: keep to the stage,
To drama without song; for you can act—
Who knows how well, when all the soul is poured
Into that sluice alone?

ARMGART.

I know, and you:
The second or third best in tragedies
That cease to touch the fibre of the time.
No; song is gone, but nature's other gift,
Self-judgment, is not gone. Song was my speech,
And with its impulse only, action came:
Song was the battle's onset, when cool purpose
Glows into rage, becomes a warring god
And moves the limbs with miracle. But now—
Oh, I should stand hemmed in with thoughts and rules—
Say "This way passion acts," yet never feel
The might of passion. How should I declaim?
As monsters write with feet instead of hands.
I will not feed on doing great tasks ill,
Dull the world's sense with mediocrity,
And live by trash that smothers excellence.
One gift I had that ranked me with the best—
The secret of my frame—and that is gone.
For all life now I am a broken thing.
But silence there! Good Leo, advise me now.

I would take humble work and do it well—
Teach music, singing—what I can—not here,
But in some smaller town where I may bring
The method you have taught me, pass your gift
To others who can use it for delight.
You think I can do that?
(*She pauses with a sob in her voice.*)

LEO.

Yes, yes, dear child!
And it were well, perhaps, to change the place—
Begin afresh as I did when I left
Vienna with a heart half broken.

ARMGART (*roused by surprise*).

You?

LEO.

Well, it is long ago. But I had lost—
No matter! We must bury our dead joys
And live above them with a living world.
But whither, think you, you would like to go?

ARMGART.

To Freiburg.

LEO.

In the Breisgau? And why there?
It is too small.

ARMGART.

Walpurga was born there,
And loves the place. She quitted it for me
These five years past. Now I will take her there.
Dear Leo, I will bury my dead joy.

LEO.

Mothers do so, bereaved; then learn to love
Another's living child.

ARMGART.

Oh, it is hard
To take the little corpse, and lay it low,
And say, "None misses it but me."
She sings——
I mean Paulina sings Fidelio,
And they will welcome her to-night.

LEO.

Well, well,
'Tis better that our griefs should not spread far.

HOW LISA LOVED THE KING.

Six hundred years ago, in Dante's time,
Before his cheek was furrowed by deep rhyme—
When Europe, fed afresh from Eastern story,
Was like a garden tangled with the glory
Of flowers hand-planted and of flowers air-sown,
Climbing and trailing, budding and full-blown,
Where purple bells are tossed amid pink stars,
And springing blades, green troops in innocent wars,
Crowd every shady spot of teeming earth,
Making invisible motion visible birth—
Six hundred years ago, Palermo town
Kept holiday. A deed of great renown,
A high revenge, had freed it from the yoke
Of hated Frenchmen, and from Calpe's rock
To where the Bosporus caught the earlier sun,
'Twas told that Pedro, King of Aragon,
Was welcomed master of all Sicily,
A royal knight, supreme as kings should be
In strength and gentleness that make high chivalry.

Spain was the favorite home of knightly grace,
Where generous men rode steeds of generous race;
Both Spanish, yet half Arab, both inspired
By mutual spirit, that each motion fired
With beauteous response, like minstrelsy
Afresh fulfilling fresh expectancy.
So when Palermo made high festival,
The joy of matrons and of maidens all
Was the mock terror of the tournament,
Where safety, with the glimpse of danger blent,
Took exultation as from epic song,
Which greatly tells the pains that to great life belong.
And in all eyes King Pedro was the king
Of cavaliers: as in a full-gemmed ring
The largest ruby, or as that bright star
Whose shining shows us where the Hyads are.
His the best jennet, and he sat it best;
His weapon, whether tilting or in rest,

Was worthiest watching, and his face once seen
Gave to the promise of his royal mien
Such rich fulfillment as the opened eyes
Of a loved sleeper, or the long-watched rise
Of vernal day, whose joy o'er stream and meadow flies.
But of the maiden forms that thick enwreathed
The broad piazza and sweet witchery breathed,
With innocent faces budding all arow
From balconies and windows high and low,
Who was it felt the deep mysterious glow,
The impregnation with supernal fire
Of young ideal love—transformed desire,
Whose passion is but worship of that Best
Taught by the many-mingled creed of each young breast?
'Twas gentle Lisa, of no noble line,
Child of Bernardo, a rich Florentine,
Who from his merchant-city hither came
To trade in drugs; yet kept an honest fame,
And had the virtue not to try and sell
Drugs that had none. He loved his riches well,
But loved them chiefly for his Lisa's sake,
Whom with a father's care he sought to make
The bride of some true honorable man:—
Of Perdicone (so the rumor ran),
Whose birth was higher than his fortunes were;
For still your trader likes a mixture fair
Of blood that hurries to some higher strain
Than reckoning money's loss and money's gain.
And of such mixture good may surely come:
Lords' scions so may learn to cast a sum,
A trader's grandson bear a well-set head,
And have less conscious manners, better bred;
Nor, when he tries to be polite, be rude instead.

'Twas Perdicone's friends made overtures
To good Bernardo: so one dame assures
Her neighbor dame who notices the youth
Fixing his eyes on Lisa; and in truth
Eyes that could see her on this summer day
Might find it hard to turn another way.
She had a pensive beauty, yet not sad;
Rather, like minor cadences that glad
The hearts of little birds amid spring boughs;
And oft the trumpet or the joust would rouse

Pulses that gave her cheek a finer glow,
Parting her lips that seemed a mimic bow
By chiseling Love for play in choral wrought,
Then quickened by him with passionate thought,
The soul that trembled in the lustrous night
Of slow long eyes. Her body was so slight,
It seemed she could have floated in the sky,
And with the angelic choir made symphony;
But in her cheek's rich tinge, and in the dark
Of darkest hair and eyes, she bore a mark
Of kinship to her generous mother earth,
The fervid land that gives the plumy palm-trees birth

She saw not Perdicone; her young mind
Dreamed not that any man had ever pined
For such a little simple maid as she:
She had but dreamed how heavenly it would be
To love some hero noble, beauteous, great,
Who would live stories worthy to narrate,
Like Roland, or the warriors of Troy,
The Cid, or Amadis, or that fair boy
Who conquered everything beneath the sun,
And somehow, sometime, died at Babylon
Fighting the Moors. For heroes all were good
And fair as that archangel who withstood
The Evil One, the author of all wrong—
That Evil One who made the French so strong;
And now the flower of heroes must be he
Who drove those tyrant's from dear Sicily,
So that her maids might walk to vespers tranquilly.

Young Lisa saw this hero in the king,
And as wood-lilies that sweet odors bring
Might dream the light that opes their modest eyne
Was lily-odored,—and as rights divine,
Round turf-laid altars, or 'neath roofs of stone,
Draw sanctity from out the heart alone
That loves and worships, so the miniature
Perplexed of her soul's world, all virgin pure,
Filled with heroic virtues that bright form,
Raona's royalty, the finished norm
Of horsemanship—the half of chivalry:
For how could generous men avengers be,
Save as God's messengers on coursers fleet?—
These, scouring earth, made Spain with Syria meet

In one self world where the same right had sway,
And good must grow as grew the blessed day.
No more; great Love his essence had endured
With Pedro's form, and entering subdued
The soul of Lisa, fervid and intense,
Proud in its choice of proud obedience
To hardship glorified by perfect reverence.

Sweet Lisa homeward carried that dire guest,
And in her chamber through the hours of rest
The darkness was alight for her with sheen
Of arms, and plumèd helm, and bright between
Their commoner gloss, like the pure living spring
'Twixt porphyry dips, or living bird's bright wing
'Twixt golden wires, the glances of the king
Flashed on her soul, and waked vibrations there
Of known delights love-mixed to new and rare:
The impalpable dream was turned to breathing flesh,
Chill thought of summer to the warm close mesh
Of sunbeams held between the citron-leaves,
Clothing her life of life. Oh, she believes
That she could be content if he but knew
(Her poor small self could claim no other due)
How Lisa's lowly love had highest reach
Of wingèd passion, whereto wingèd speech
Would be scorched remnants left by mounting flame.
Though, had she such lame message, were it blame
To tell what greatness dwelt in her, what rank
She held in loving? Modest maidens shrank
From telling love that fed on selfish hope;
But love, as hopeless as the shattering song
Wailed for loved beings who have joined the throng
Of mighty dead ones——Nay, but she was weak—
Knew only prayers and ballads—could not speak
With eloquence save what dumb creatures have,
That with small cries and touches small boons crave.

She watched all day that she might see him pass
With knights and ladies; but she said, "Alas!
Though he should see me, it were all as one
He saw a pigeon sitting on the stone
Of wall or balcony: some colored spot
His eye just sees, his mind regardeth not.
I have no music-touch that could bring nigh
My love to his soul's hearing. I shall die,

And he will never know who Lisa was—
The trader's child, whose soaring spirit rose
As hedge-born aloe-flowers that rarest years disclose.

"For were I now a fair deep-breasted queen
A-horseback, with blonde hair, and tunic green
Gold-bordered, like Costanza, I should need
No change within to make me queenly there;
For they the royal-hearted women are
Who nobly love the noblest, yet have grace
For needy suffering lives in lowliest place,
Carrying a choicer sunlight in their smile,
The heavenliest ray that pitieth the vile.
My love is such, it cannot choose but soar
Up to the highest; yet for evermore,
Though I were happy, throned beside the king,
I should be tender to each little thing
With hurt warm breast, that had no speech to tell
Its inward pang, and I would soothe it well
With tender touch and with a low soft moan
For company: my dumb love-pang is lone,
Prisoned as topaz-beam within a rough-garbed stone."

So, inward-wailing, Lisa passed her days.
Each night the August moon with changing phase
Looked broader, harder on her unchanged pain;
Each noon the heat lay heavier again
On her despair; until her body frail
Shrank like the snow that watchers in the vale
See narrowed on the height each summer morn;
While her dark glance burned larger, more forlorn,
As if the soul within her all on fire
Made of her being one swift funeral pyre.
Father and mother saw with sad dismay
The meaning of their riches melt away:
For without Lisa what would sequins buy?
What wish were left if Lisa were to die?
Through her they cared for summers still to come,
Else they would be as ghosts without a home
In any flesh that could feel glad desire.
They pay the best physicians, never tire
Of seeking what will soothe her, promising
That aught she longed for, though it were a thing
Hard to be come at as the Indian snow,
Or roses that on alpine summits blow—

It should be hers. She answers with low voice,
She longs for death alone—death is her choice;
Death is the King who never did think scorn,
But rescues every meanest soul to sorrow born.

Yet one day, as they bent above her bed
And watched her in brief sleep, her drooping head
Turned gently, as the thirsty flowers that feel
Some moist revival through their petals steal,
And little flutterings of her lids and lips
Told of such dreamy joy as sometimes dips
A skyey shadow in the mind's poor pool.
She oped her eyes, and turned their dark gems full
Upon her father, as in utterance dumb
Of some new prayer that in her sleep had come.
"What is it, Lisa?" "Father, I would see
Minuccio, the great singer; bring him me."
For always, night and day, her unstilled thought,
Wandering all o'er its little world, had sought
How she could reach, by some soft pleading touch,
King Pedro's soul, that she who loved so much
Dying, might have a place within his mind—
A little grave which he would sometimes find
And plant some flower on it—some thought, some memory kind.
Till in her dream she saw Minuccio
Touching his viola, and chanting low
A strain that, falling on her brokenly,
Seemed blossoms lightly blown from off a tree,
Each burdened with a word that was a scent—
Raona, Lisa, love, death, tournament;
Then in her dream she said, "He sings of me—
Might be my messenger; ah, now I see
The king is listening——" Then she awoke,
And, missing her dear dream, that new-born longing spoke.

She longed for music: that was natural;
Physicians said it was medicinal;
The humors might be schooled by true consent
Of a fine tenor and fine instrument;
In brief, good music, mixed with doctor's stuff,
Apollo with Asklepios—enough!
Minuccio, entreated, gladly came.
(He was a singer of most gentle fame—

A noble, kindly spirit, not elate
That he was famous, but that song was great—
Would sing as finely to this suffering child
As at the court where princes on him smiled.)
Gently he entered and sat down by her,
Asking what sort of strain she would prefer—
The voice alone, or voice with viol wed;
Then, when she chose the last, he preluded
With magic hand, that summoned from the strings
Aerial spirits, rare yet vibrant wings
That fanned the pulses of his listener,
And waked each sleeping sense with blissful stir.
Her cheek already showed a slow faint blush,
But soon the voice, in pure full liquid rush,
Made all the passion, that till now she felt,
Seem but cool waters that in warmer melt.
Finished the song, she prayed to be alone
With kind Minuccio; for her faith had grown
To trust him as if missioned like a priest
With some high grace, that when his singing ceased
Still made him wiser, more magnanimous
Than common men who had no genius.

So laying her small hand within his palm,
She told him how that secret glorious harm
Of loftiest loving had befallen her;
That death, her only hope, most bitter were,
If when she died her love must perish too
As songs unsung and thoughts unspoken do,
Which else might live within another breast.
She said, "Minuccio, the grave were rest,
If I were sure, that lying cold and lone,
My love, my best of life, had safely flown
And nestled in the bosom of the king;
See, 'tis a small weak bird, with unfledged wing.
But you will carry it for me secretly,
And bear it to the king, then come to me
And tell me it is safe, and I shall go
Content, knowing that he I love my love doth know."

Then she wept silently, but each large tear
Made pleading music to the inward ear
Of good Minuccio: "Lisa, trust in me,"
He said, and kissed her fingers loyally;
"It is sweet law to me to do your will,

And ere the sun his round shall thrice fulfill,
I hope to bring you news of such rare skill
As amulets have, that aches in trusting bosoms still."
He needed not to pause and first devise
How he should tell the king; for in nowise
Were such love-message worthily bested
Save in fine verse by music renderèd.
He sought a poet-friend, a Siennese,
And "Mico, mine," he said, "full oft to please
Thy whim of sadness I have sung thee strains
To make thee weep in verse: now pay my pains,
And write me a canzòn divinely sad,
Sinlessly passionate and meekly mad
With young despair, speaking a maiden's heart
Of fifteen summers, who would fain depart
From ripening life's new-urgent mystery—
Love-choice of one too high her love to be—
But cannot yield her breath till she has poured
Her strength away in this hot-bleeding word
Telling the secret of her soul to her soul's lord."

Said Mico, "Nay, that thought is poesy,
I need but listen as it sings to me.
Come thou again to-morrow." The third day,
When linkèd notes had perfected the lay,
Minuccio had his summons to the court
To make, as he was wont, the moments short
Of ceremonious dinner to the king.
This was the time when he had meant to bring
Melodious message of young Lisa's love:
He waited till the air had ceased to move
To ringing silver, till Falernian wine
Made quickened sense with quietude combine,
And then with passionate descant made each ear
incline.

Love, thou didst see me, light as morning's breath,
Roaming a garden in a joyous error,
Laughing at chases vain, a happy child,
Till of thy countenance the alluring terror
In majesty from out the blossoms smiled,
From out their life seeming a beauteous Death.

O Love, who so didst choose me for thine own,
Taking this little isle to thy great sway,

See now, it is the honor of thy throne
That what thou gavest perish not away,
Nor leave some sweet remembrance to atone
By life that will be for the brief life gone:
Hear, ere the shroud o'er these frail limbs be thrown—
Since every king is vassal unto thee,
My heart's lord needs must listen loyally—
O tell him I am waiting for my Death!

Tell him, for that he hath such royal power
'Twere hard for him to think how small a thing,
How slight a sign, would make a wealthy dower
For one like me, the bride of that pale king
Whose bed is mine at some swift-nearing hour.
Go to my lord, and to his memory bring
That happy birthday of my sorrowing
When his large glance made meaner gazers glad,
Entering the bannered lists: 'twas then I had
The wound that laid me in the arms of Death.

Tell him, O Love, I am a lowly maid,
No more than any little knot of thyme
That he with careless foot may often tread;
Yet lowest fragrance oft will mount sublime
And cleave to things most high and hallowèd,
As doth the fragrance of my life's springtime,
My lowly love, that soaring seeks to climb
Within his thought, and make a gentle bliss,
More blissful than if mine, in being his:
So shall I live in him and rest in Death.

The strain was new. It seemed a pleading cry,
And yet a rounded perfect melody,
Making grief beauteous as the tear-filled eyes
Of little child at little miseries.
Trembling at first, then swelling as it rose,
Like rising light that broad and broader grows,
It filled the hall, and so possessed the air
That not one breathing soul was present there,
Though dullest, slowest, but was quivering
In music's grasp, and forced to hear her sing.
But most such sweet compulsion took the mood
Of Pedro (tired of doing what he would).
Whether the words which that strange meaning bore
Were but the poet's feigning or aught more,

Was bounden question, since their aim must be
At some imagined or true royalty.
He called Minuccio and bade him tell
What poet of the day had writ so well;
For though they came behind all former rhymes,
The verses were not bad for these poor times.
"Monsignor, they are only three days old,"
Minuccio said; "but it must not be told
How this song grew, save to your royal ear."
Eager, the king withdrew where none was near
And gave close audience to Minuccio,
Who meetly told that love-tale meet to know.
The king had features pliant to confess
The presence of a manly tenderness—
Son, father, brother, lover, blent in one,
In fine harmonic exaltation—
The spirit of religious chivalry.
He listened, and Minuccio could see
The tender, generous admiration spread
O'er all his face, and glorify his head
With royalty that would have kept its rank
Though his brocaded robes to tatters shrank.
He answered without pause, "So sweet a maid,
In nature's own insignia arrayed,
Though she were come of unmixed trading blood
That sold and bartered ever since the Flood,
Would have the self-contained and single worth
Of radiant jewels born in darksome earth.
Raona were a shame to Sicily,
Letting such love and tears unhonored be:
Hasten, Minuccio, tell her that the king
To-day will surely visit her when vespers ring."

Joyful, Minuccio bore the joyous word,
And told at full, while none but Lisa heard,
How each thing had befallen, sang the song,
And like a patient nurse who would prolong
All means of soothing, dwelt upon each tone,
Each look, with which the mighty Aragon
Marked the high worth his royal heart assigned
To that dear place he held in Lisa's mind.
She listened till the draughts of pure content
Through all her limbs like some new being went—
Life, not recovered, but untried before,
From out the growing world's unmeasured store

Of fuller, better, more divinely mixed.
'Twas glad reverse: she had so firmly fixed
To die, already seemed to fall a veil
Shrouding the inner glow from light of senses pale.

Her parents wondering see her half arise—
Wondering, rejoicing, see her long dark eyes
Brimful with clearness, not of 'scaping tears,
But of some light ethereal that enspheres
Their orbs with calm, some vision newly learned
Where strangest fires erewhile had blindly burned.
She asked to have her soft white robe and band
And coral ornaments, and with her hand
She gave her locks' dark length a backward fall,
Then looked intently in a mirror small,
And feared her face might perhaps displease the king;
"In truth," she said, "I am a tiny thing;
I was too bold to tell what could such visit bring."

Meanwhile the king, revolving in his thought
That virgin passion, was more deeply wrought
To chivalrous pity; and at vesper bell
With careless mien which hid his purpose well,
Went forth on horseback, and as if by chance
Passing Bernardo's house, he paused to glance
At the fine garden of this wealthy man,
This Tuscan trader turned Palermitan;
But, presently dismounting, chose to walk
Amid the trellises, in gracious talk
With this same trader, deigning even to ask
If he had yet fulfilled the father's task
Of marrying that daughter whose young charms
Himself, betwixt the passages of arms,
Noted admiringly. "Monsignor, no,
She is not married; that were little woe,
Since she has counted barely fifteen years,
But all such hopes of late have turned to fears;
She droops and fades; though for a space quite brief—
Scarce three hours past—she finds some strange relief."

The king advised: "'Twere dole to all of us,
The world should lose a maid so beauteous;
Let me now see her; since I am her liege lord,
Her spirits must wage war with death at my strong word."

In such half-serious playfulness, he wends,
With Lisa's father and two chosen friends,
Up to the chamber where she pillowed sits
Watching the open door, that now admits
A presence as much better than her dreams,
As happiness than any longing seems.
The king advanced, and, with a reverent kiss
Upon her hand, said, "Lady, what is this?
You, whose sweet youth should others' solace be,
Pierce all our hearts, languishing piteously.
We pray you, for the love of us, be cheered.
Nor be too reckless of that life, endeared
To us who know your passing worthiness,
And count your blooming life as part of our life's bliss."
Those words, that touch upon her hand from him
Whom her soul worshiped, as far seraphim
Worship the distant glory, brought some shame
Quivering upon her cheek, yet thrilled her frame
With such deep joy she seemed in paradise,
In wondering gladness, and in dumb surprise
That bliss could be so blissful: then she spoke—
"Signor, I was too weak to bear the yoke,
The golden yoke of thoughts too great for me;
That was the ground of my infirmity.
But now, I pray your grace to have belief
That I shall soon be well, nor any more cause grief."

The king alone perceived the covert sense
Of all her words, which made one evidence
With her pure voice and candid loveliness,
That he had lost much honor, honoring less
That message of her passionate distress.
He stayed beside her for a little while
With gentle looks and speech, until a smile
As placid as a ray of early morn
On opening flower-cups o'er her lips was borne.
When he had left her, and the tidings spread
Through all the town how he had visited
The Tuscan trader's daughter, who was sick,
Men said, it was a royal deed and catholic.
And Lisa? she no longer wished for death;
But as a poet, who sweet verses saith
Within his soul, and joys in music there,
Nor seeks another heaven, nor can bear

Disturbing pleasures, so was she content,
Breathing the life of grateful sentiment.
She thought no maid betrothed could be more blest;
For treasure must be valued by the test
Of highest excellence and rarity,
And her dear joy was best as best could be;
There seemed no other crown to her delight
Now the high loved one saw her love aright.
Thus her soul thriving on that exquisite mood,
Spread like the May-time all its beauteous good
O'er the soft bloom of neck, and arms, and cheek,
And strengthened the sweet body, once so weak,
Until she rose and walked, and, like a bird
With sweetly rippling throat, she made her spring joys
heard.
The king, when he the happy change had seen,
Trusted the ear of Constance, his fair queen,
With Lisa's innocent secret, and conferred
How they should jointly, by their deed and word,
Honor this maiden's love, which, like the prayer
Of loyal hermits, never thought to share
In what it gave. The queen had that chief grace
Of womanhood, a heart that can embrace
All goodness in another woman's form;
And that same day, ere the sun lay too warm
On southern terraces, a messenger
Informed Bernardo that the royal pair
Would straightway visit him and celebrate
Their gladness at his daughter's happier state,
Which they were fain to see. Soon came the king
On horseback, with his barons, heralding
The advent of the queen in courtly state;
And all, descending at the garden gate,
Streamed with their feathers, velvet, and brocade,
Through the pleached alleys, till they, pausing, made
A lake of splendor 'mid the aloes gray—
When, meekly facing all their proud array,
The white-robed Lisa with her parents stood,
As some white dove before the gorgeous brood
Of dapple-breasted birds born by the Colchian flood.

The king and queen, by gracious looks and speech,
Encourage her, and thus their courtiers teach
How this fair morning they may courtliest be
By making Lisa pass it happily.

And soon the ladies and the barons all
Draw her by turns, as at a festival
Made for her sake, to easy, gay discourse,
And compliment with looks and smiles enforce;
A joyous hum is heard the gardens round;
Soon there is Spanish dancing and the sound
Of minstrel's song, and autumn fruits are plucked;
Till mindfully the king and queen conduct
Lisa apart to where a trellised shade
Made pleasant resting. Then King Pedro said—

"Excellent maiden, that rich gift of love
Your heart hath made us, hath a worth above
All royal treasures, nor is fitly met
Save when the grateful memory of deep debt
Lies still behind the outward honors done:
And as a sign that no oblivion
Shall overflood that faithful memory,
We while we live your cavalier will be,
Nor will we ever arm ourselves for fight,
Whether for struggle dire or brief delight
Of warlike feigning, but we first will take
The colors you ordain, and for your sake
Charge the more bravely where your emblem is;
Nor will we ever claim an added bliss
To our sweet thoughts of you save one sole kiss.
But there still rests the outward honor meet
To mark your worthiness, and we entreat
That you will turn your ear to proffered vows
Of one who loves you, and would be your spouse.
We must not wrong yourself and Sicily
By letting all your blooming years pass by
Unmated: you will give the world its due
From beauteous maiden and become a matron true."

Then Lisa, wrapt in virgin wonderment
At her ambitious love's complete content,
Which left no further good for her to seek
Than love's obedience, said with accent meek—
"Monsignor, I know well that were it known
To all the world how high my love had flown,
There would be few who would not deem me mad,
Or say my mind the falsest image had
Of my condition and your lofty place.
But heaven has seen that for no moment's space

Have I forgotten you to be the king,
Or me myself to be a lowly thing—
A little lark, enamored of the sky,
That soared to sing, to break its breast, and die.
But, as you better know than I, the heart
In choosing chooseth not its own desert,
But that great merit which attracteth it;
'Tis law, I struggled, but I must submit,
And having seen a worth all worth above,
I loved you, love you, and shall always love.
But that doth mean, my will is ever yours,
Not only when your will my good insures,
But if it wrought me what the world calls harm—
Fire, wounds, would wear from your dear will a charm.
That you will be my knight is full content,
And for that kiss—I pray, first for the queen's consent."

Her answer, given with such firm gentleness,
Pleased the queen well, and made her hold no less
Of Lisa's merit than the king had held.
And so, all cloudy threats of grief dispelled,
There was betrothal made that very morn
'Twixt Perdicone, youthful, brave, well-born,
And Lisa, whom he loved; she loving well
The lot that from obedience befell.
The queen a rare betrothal ring on each
Bestowed, and other gems, with gracious speech.
And that no joy might lack, the king, who knew
The youth was poor, gave him rich Ceffalù
And Cataletta, large and fruitful lands—
Adding much promise when he joined their hands.
At last he said to Lisa, with an air
Gallant yet noble: "Now we claim our share
From your sweet love, a share which is not small:
For in the sacrament one crumb is all."
Then taking her small face his hands between,
He kissed her on the brow with kiss serene,
Fit seal to that pure vision her young soul had seen.

Sicilians witnessed that King Pedro kept
His royal promise: Perdicone stept
To many honors honorably won,
Living with Lisa in true union.

Throughout his life the king still took delight:
To call himself fair Lisa's faithful knight:
And never wore in field or tournament
A scarf or emblem save by Lisa sent.

Such deeds made subjects loyal in that land:
They joyed that one so worthy to command,
So chivalrous and gentle, had become
The king of Sicily, and filled the room
Of Frenchmen, who abused the Church's trust,
Till, in a righteous vengeance on their lust,
Messina rose, with God, and with the dagger's thrust.

L'ENVOI.

Reader, this story pleased me long ago
In the bright pages of Boccaccio,
And where the author of a good we know,
Let us not fail to pay the grateful thanks we owe.

A MINOR PROPHET.

I HAVE a friend, a vegetarian seer,
By name Elias Baptist Butterworth,
A harmless, bland, disinterested man,
Whose ancestors in Cromwell's day believed
The Second Advent certain in five years,
But when King Charles the Second came instead,
Revised their date and sought another world:
I mean—not heaven, but—America.
A fervid stock, whose generous hope embraced
The fortunes of mankind, not stopping short
At rise of leather, or the fall of gold,
Nor listening to the voices of the time
As housewives listen to a cackling hen,
With wonder whether she has laid her egg
On their own nest-egg. Still they did insist
Somewhat too wearisomely on the joys
Of their Millennium, when coats and hats
Would all be of one pattern, books and songs
All fit for Sundays, and the casual talk
As good as sermons preached extempore.

And in Elias the ancestral zeal
Breathes strong as ever, only modified
By Transatlantic air and modern thought.
You could not pass him in the street and fail
To note his shoulders' long declivity,
Beard to the waist, swan-neck, and large pale eyes;
Or, when he lifts his hat, to mark his hair
Brushed back to show his great capacity—
A full grain's length at the angle of the brow
Proving him witty, while the shallower men
Only seemed witty in their repartees.
Not that he's vain, but that his doctrine needs
The testimony of his frontal lobe.
On all points he adopts the latest views;
Takes for the key of universal Mind
The "levitation" of stout gentlemen;
Believes the Rappings are not spirits' work,

But the Thought-atmosphere's, a steam of brains
In correlated force of raps, as proved
By motion, heat, and science generally;
The spectrum, for example, which has shown
The self-same metals in the sun as here;
So the Thought-atmosphere is everywhere.
High truths that glimmered under other names
To ancient sages, whence good scholarship
Applied to Eleusinian mysteries—
The Vedas—Tripitaka—Vendidad—
Might furnish weaker proof for weaker minds
That Thought was rapping in the hoary past,
And might have edified the Greeks by raps
At the greater Dionysia, if their ears
Had not been filled with Sophoclean verse.
And when all Earth is vegetarian—
When, lacking butchers, quadrupeds die out,
And less Thought-atmosphere is reabsorbed
By nerves of insects parasitical,
Those higher truths, seized now by higher minds
But not expressed (the insects hindering)
Will either flash out into eloquence,
Or better still, be comprehensible
By rappings simply, without need of roots.

'Tis on this theme—the vegetarian world—
That good Elias willingly expands:
He loves to tell in mildly nasal tones
And vowels stretched to suit the widest views,
The future fortunes of our infant Earth—
When it will be too full of human kind
To have the room for wilder animals.
Saith he, Sahara will be populous
With families of gentlemen retired
From commerce in more Central Africa,
Who order coolness as we order coal,
And have a lobe anterior strong enough
To think away the sand-storms. Science thus
Will leave no spot on this terraqueous globe
Unfit to be inhabited by man,
The chief of animals: all meaner brutes
Will have been smoked or elbowed out of life.
No lions then shall lap Caffrarian pools,
Or shake the Atlas with their midnight roar:
Even the slow, slime-loving crocodile,

The last of animals to take a hint,
Will then retire forever from a scene
Where public feeling strongly sets against him.
Fishes may lead carnivorous lives obscure,
But must not dream of culinary rank
Or being dished in good society.
Imagination in that distant age,
Aiming at fiction called historical,
Will vainly try to reconstruct the times
When it was man's preposterous delight
To sit astride live horses, which consumed
Materials for incalculable cakes;
When there were milkmaids who drew milk from cows
With udders kept abnormal for that end
Since the rude mythopœic period
Of Aryan dairymen who did not blush
To call their milkmaid and their daughter one—
Helplessly gazing at the Milky Way,
Nor dreaming of the astral cocoa-nuts
Quite at the service of posterity.
'Tis to be feared, though, that the duller boys,
Much given to anachronisms and nuts,
(Elias has confessed boys will be boys)
May write a jockey for a centaur, think
Europa's suitor was an Irish bull,
Æsop a journalist who wrote up Fox,
And Bruin a chief swindler upon 'Change.
Boys will be boys, but dogs will all be moral,
With longer alimentary canals
Suited to diet vegetarian.
The uglier breeds will fade from memory,
Or, being palæontological,
Live but as portraits in large learned books,
Distasteful to the feelings of an age
Nourished on purest beauty. Earth will hold
No stupid brutes, no cheerful quecrnesses,
No naïve cunning, grave absurdity.
Wart-pigs with tender and rental grunts,
Wombats much flattened as to their contour,
Perhaps from too much crushing in the ark,
But taking meekly that fatality;
The serious cranes, unstrung by ridicule;
Long-headed, short-legged, solemn-looking curs
(Wise, silent critics of a flippant age);
The silly straddling foals, the weak-brained geese

Hissing fallaciously at sound of wheels—
All these rude products will have disappeared
Along with every faulty human type.
By dint of diet vegetarian
All will be harmony of hue and line,
Bodies and minds all perfect, limbs well-turned,
And talk quite free from aught erroneous.

Thus far Elias in his seer's mantle:
But at this climax in his prophecy
My sinking spirits, fearing to be swamped,
Urge me to speak. "High prospects, these, my friend,
Setting the weak carnivorous brain astretch;
We will resume the thread another day."
"To-morrow," cries Elias, "at this hour?"
"No, not to-morrow—I shall have a cold—
At least I feel some soreness—this endemic—
Good-bye."
No tears are sadder than the smile
With which I quit Elias. Bitterly
I feel that every change upon this earth
Is bought with sacrifice. My yearnings fail
To reach that high apocalyptic mount
Which shows in bird's-eye view a perfect world,
Or enter warmly into other joys
Than those of faulty, struggling human kind.
That strain upon my soul's too feeble wing
Ends in ignoble floundering: I fall
Into short-sighted pity for the men
Who living in those perfect future times
Will not know half the dear imperfect things
That move my smiles and tears—will never know
The fine old incongruities that raise
My friendly laugh; the innocent conceits
That like a needless eyeglass or black patch
Give those who wear them harmless happiness;
The twists and cracks in our poor earthenware,
That touch me to more conscious fellowship
(I am not myself the finest Parian)
With my coevals. So poor Colin Clout,
To whom raw onion gives prospective zest,
Consoling hours of dampest wintry work,
Could hardly fancy any regal joys
Quite unimpregnate with the onion's scent:
Perhaps his highest hopes are not all clear

Of waftings from that energetic bulb:
'Tis well that onion is not heresy.
Speaking in parable, I am Colin Clout.
A clinging flavor penetrates my life—
My onion is imperfectness: I cleave
To nature's blunders, evanescent types
Which sages banish from Utopia.
"Not worship beauty?" say you. Patience, friend!
I worship in the temple with the rest;
But by my hearth I keep a sacred nook
For gnomes and dwarfs, duck-footed waddling elves
Who stitched and hammered for the weary man
In days of old. And in that piety
I clothe ungainly forms inherited
From toiling generations, daily bent
At desk, or plough, or loom, or in the mine,
In pioneering labors for the world.
Nay, I am apt when floundering confused
From too rash flight, to grasp at paradox,
And pity future men who will not know
A keen experience with pity blent,
The pathos exquisite of lovely minds
Hid in harsh forms—not penetrating them
Like fire divine within a common bush
Which glows transfigured by the heavenly guest,
So that men put their shoes off; but encaged
Like a sweet child within some thick-walled cell,
Who leaps and fails to hold the window-bars,
But having shown a little dimpled hand
Is visited thenceforth by tender hearts
Whose eyes keep watch about the prison-walls.
A foolish, nay, a wicked paradox!
For purest pity is the eye of love
Melting at sight of sorrow; and to grieve
Because it sees no sorrow, shows a love
Warped from its truer nature, turned to love
Of merest habit, like the miser's greed.
But I am Colin still: my prejudice
Is for the flavor of my daily food.
Not that I doubt the world is growing still
As once it grew from Chaos and from Night;
Or have a soul too shrunken for the hope
Which dawned in human breasts, a double morn,
With earliest watchings of the rising light
Chasing the darkness; and through many an age

Has raised the vision of a future time
That stands an angel with a face all mild
Spearing the demon. I too rest in faith
That man's perfection is the crowning flower,
Toward which the urgent sap in life's great tree
Is pressing,—seen in puny blossoms now,
But in the world's great morrows to expand
With broadest petal and with deepest glow.

Yet, see the patched and plodding citizen
Waiting upon the pavement with the throng
While some victorious world-hero makes
Triumphal entry, and the peal of shouts
And flash of faces 'neath uplifted hats
Run like a storm of joy along the streets!
He says, "God bless him!" almost with a sob,
As the great hero passes; he is glad
The world holds mighty men and mighty deeds;
The music stirs his pulses like strong wine,
The moving splendor touches him with awe—
'Tis glory shed around the common weal,
And he will pay his tribute willingly,
Though with the pennies earned by sordid toil.
Perhaps the hero's deeds have helped to bring
A time when every honest citizen
Shall wear a coat unpatched. And yet he feels
More easy fellowship with neighbors there
Who look on too; and he will soon relapse
From noticing the banners and the steeds
To think with pleasure there is just one bun
Left in his pocket, that may serve to tempt
The wide-eyed lad, whose weight is all too much
For that young mother's arms: and then he falls
To dreamy picturing of sunny days
When he himself was a small big-cheeked lad
In some far village where no heroes came,
And stood a listener 'twixt his father's legs
In the warm fire-light while the old folk talked
And shook their heads and looked upon the floor;
And he was puzzled, thinking life was fine—
The bread and cheese so nice all through the year
And Christmas sure to come! Oh that good time!
He, could he choose, would have those days again
And see the dear old-fashioned things once more.
But soon the wheels and drums have all passed by

And tramping feet are heard like sudden rain;
The quiet startles our good citizen;
He feels the child upon his arms, and knows
He is with the people making holiday
Because of hopes for better days to come.
But hope to him was like the brilliant west
Telling of sunrise in a world unknown,
And from that dazzling curtain of bright hues
He turned to the familiar face of fields
Lying all clear in the calm morning land.
Maybe 'tis wiser not to fix a lens
Too scrutinizing on the glorious times
When Barbarossa shall arise and shake
His mountain, good King Arthur come again,
And all the heroes of such giant soul
That, living once to cheer mankind with hope,
They had to sleep until the time was ripe
For greater deeds to match their greater thought.
Yet no! the earth yields nothing more divine
Than high prophetic vision—than the Seer
Who fasting from man's meaner joy beholds
The paths of beauteous order, and constructs
A fairer type to shame our low content.
But prophecy is like potential sound
Which turned to music seems a voice sublime
From out the soul of light; but turns to noise
In scrannel pipes, and makes all ears averse.

The faith that life on earth is being shaped
To glorious ends, that order, justice, love
Mean man's completeness, mean effect as sure
As roundness in the dew-drop—that great faith
Is but the rushing and expanding stream
Of thought, of feeling, fed by all the past.
Our finest hope is finest memory,
As they who love in age think youth is blest
Because it has a life to fill with love.
Full souls are double mirrors, making still
An endless vista of fair things before
Repeating things behind; so faith is strong
Only when we are strong, shrinks when we shrink.
It comes when music stirs us and the chords
Moving on some grand climax shake our souls
With influx new that makes new energies.
It comes in swellings of the heart and tears

That rise at noble and at gentle deeds—
At labors of the master artist's hand
Which, trembling, touches to a finer end,
Trembling before an image seen within.
It comes in moments of heroic love,
Unjealous joy in joy not made for us—
In conscious triumph of the good within
Making us worship goodness that rebukes.
Even our failures are a prophecy,
Even our yearnings and our bitter tears
After that fair and true we cannot grasp;
As patriots who seem to die in vain
Make liberty more sacred by their pangs.

Presentiment of better things on earth
Sweeps in with every force that stirs our souls
To admiration, self-renouncing love,
Or thoughts, like light, that bind the world in one;
Sweeps like the sense of vastness, when at night
We hear the roll and dash of waves that break
Nearer and nearer with the rushing tide,
Which rises to the level of the cliff
Because the wide Atlantic rolls behind
Throbbing respondent to the far-off orbs.

BROTHER AND SISTER.

I.

I CANNOT choose but think upon the time
When our two lives grew like two buds that kiss
At lightest thrill from the bee's swinging chime,
Because the one so near the other is.

He was the elder and a little man
Of forty inches, bound to show no dread,
And I the girl that puppy-like now ran,
Now lagged behind my brother's larger tread.

I held him wise, and when he talked to me
Of snakes and birds, and which God loved the best,
I thought his knowledge marked the boundary
Where men grew blind, though angels knew the rest.

If he said "Hush!" I tried to hold my breath,
Wherever he said "Come!" I stepped in faith.

II.

Long years have left their writing on my brow,
But yet the freshness and the dew-fed beam
Of those young mornings are about me now,
When we two wandered toward the far-off stream

With rod and line. Our basket held a store
Baked for us only, and I thought with joy
That I should have my share, though he had more,
Because he was the elder and a boy.

The firmaments of daisies since to me
Have had those mornings in their opening eyes,
The bunchèd cowslip's pale transparency
Carries that sunshine of sweet memories,

And wild-rose branches take their finest scent
From those blest hours of infantine content.

III.

Our mother bade us keep the trodden ways,
Stroked down my tippet, set my brother's frill,
Then with the benediction of her gaze
Clung to us lessening, and pursued us still

Across the homestead to the rookery elms,
Whose tall old trunks had each a grassy mound,
So rich for us, we counted them as realms
With varied products: here were earth-nuts found,

And here the lady-fingers in deep shade;
Here sloping toward the Moat the rushes grew,
The large to split for pith, the small to braid;
While over all the dark rooks cawing flew,

And made a happy strange solemnity,
A deep-toned chant from life unknown to me.

IV.

Our meadow-path had memorable spots:
One where it bridged a tiny rivulet,
Deep hid by tangled blue Forget-me-nots;
And all along the waving grasses met

My little palm, or nodded to my cheek,
When flowers with upturned faces gazing drew
My wonder downward, seeming all to speak
With eyes of souls that dumbly heard and knew.

Then came the copse, where wild things rushed unseen,
And black-scathed grass betrayed the past abode
Of mystic gypsies, who still lurked between
Me and each hidden distance of the road.

A gypsy once had startled me at play,
Blotting with her dark smile my sunny day.

V.

Thus rambling we were schooled in deepest lore,
And learned the meanings that give words a soul,
The fear, the love, the primal passionate store,
Whose shaping impulses make manhood whole.

Those hours were seed to all my after good;
My infant gladness, through eye, ear, and touch,
Took easily as warmth a various food
To nourish the sweet skill of loving much.

For who in age shall roam the earth and find
Reasons for loving that will strike out love
With sudden rod from the hard year-pressed mind?
Were reasons sown as thick as stars above,

'Tis love must see them, as the eye sees light:
Day is but Number to the darkened sight.

VI.

Our brown canal was endless to my thought;
And on its banks I sat in dreamy peace,
Unknowing how the good I loved was wrought,
Untroubled by the fear that it would cease.

Slowly the barges floated into view
Rounding a grassy hill to me sublime
With some Unknown beyond it, whither flew
The parting cuckoo toward a fresh spring-time.

The wide-arched bridge, the scented elder flowers,
The wondrous watery rings that died too soon,
The echoes of the quarry, the still hours
With white robe sweeping on the shadeless noon,

Were but my growing self, are part of me,
My present Past, my root of piety.

VII.

Those long days measured by my little feet
Had chronicles which yield me many a text;
Where irony still finds an image meet
Of full-grown judgments in this world perplexed.

One day my brother left me in high charge,
To mind the rod, while he went seeking bait,
And bade me, when I saw a nearing barge,
Snatch out the line, lest he should come too late.

Proud of the task, I watched with all my might
For one whole minute, till my eyes grew wide,

Till sky and earth took on a strange new light
And seemed a dream-world floating on some tide—

A fair pavilioned boat for me alone
Bearing me onward through the vast unknown.

VIII.

But sudden came the barge's pitch-black prow,
Nearer and angrier came my brother's cry,
And all my soul was quivering fear, when lo!
Upon the imperiled line, suspended high,

A silver perch! My guilt that won the prey,
Now turned to merit, had a guerdon rich
Of hugs and praises, and made merry play,
Until my triumph reached its highest pitch

When all at home were told the wondrous feat,
And how the little sister had fished well.
In secret, though my fortune tasted sweet,
I wondered why this happiness befell.

"The little lass had luck," the gardener said:
And so I learned, luck was with glory wed.

IX.

We had the self-same world enlarged for each
By loving difference of girl and boy:
The fruit that hung on high beyond my reach
He plucked for me, and oft he must employ

A measuring glance to guide my tiny shoe
Where lay firm stepping-stones, or call to mind
"This thing I like my sister may not do,
For she is little, and I must be kind."

Thus boyish Will the nobler mastery learned
Where inward vision over impulse reigns,
Widening its life with separate life discerned,
A Like unlike, a Self that self restrains.

His years with others must the sweeter be
For those brief days he spent in loving me.

X.

His sorrow was my sorrow, and his joy
Sent little leaps and laughs through all my frame;
My doll seemed lifeless and no girlish toy
Had any reason when my brother came.

I knelt with him at marbles, marked his fling
Cut the ringed stem and make the apple drop,
Or watched him winding close the spiral string
That looped the orbits of the humming top.

Grasped by such fellowship my vagrant thought
Ceased with dream-fruit dream-wishes to fulfill;
My airy-picturing fantasy was taught
Subjection to the harder, truer skill

That seeks with deeds to grave a thought-tracked line,
And by "What is," "What will be" to define.

XI.

School parted us; we never found again
That childish world where our two spirits mingled
Like scents from varying roses that remain
One sweetness, nor can evermore be singled.

Yet the twin habit of that early time
Lingered for long about the heart and tongue:
We had been natives of one happy clime,
And its dear accent to our utterance clung.

Till the dire years whose awful name is Change
Had grasped our souls still yearning in divorce,
And pitiless shaped them in two forms that range
Two elements which sever their life's course.

But were another childhood-world my share,
I would be born a little sister there.

STRADIVARIUS.

Your soul was lifted by the wings to-day
Hearing the master of the violin:
You praised him, praised the great Sebastian too
Who made that fine Chaconne; but did you think
Of old Antonio Stradivari?—him
Who a good century and half ago
Put his true work in that brown instrument
And by the nice adjustment of its frame
Gave it responsive life, continuous
With the master's finger-tips and perfected
Like them by delicate rectitude of use.
Not Bach alone, helped by fine precedent
Of genius gone before, nor Joachim
Who holds the strain afresh incorporate
By inward hearing and notation strict
Of nerve and muscle, made our joy to-day:
Another soul was living in the air
And swaying it to true deliverance
Of high invention and responsive skill:—
That plain white-aproned man who stood at work
Patient and accurate full fourscore years,
Cherished his sight and touch by temperance,
And since keen sense is love of perfectness
Made perfect violins, the needed paths
For inspiration and high mastery.

No simpler man than he: he never cried,
"Why was I born to this monotonous task
Of making violins?" or flung them down
To suit with hurling act a well-hurled curse
At labor on such perishable stuff.
Hence neighbors in Cremona held him dull,
Called him a slave, a mill-horse, a machine,
Begged him to tell his motives or to lend
A few gold pieces to a loftier mind.
Yet he had pithy words full fed by fact;
For Fact, well-trusted, reasons and persuades,
Is gnomic, cutting, or ironical,
Draws tears, or is a tocsin to arouse—

Can hold all figures of the orator
In one plain sentence; has her pauses too —
Eloquent silence at the chasm abrupt
Where knowledge ceases. Thus Antonio
Made answers as Fact willed, and made them strong.

Naldo, a painter of eclectic school,
Taking his dicers, candlelight and grins
From Caravaggio, and in holier groups
Combining Flemish flesh with martyrdom —
Knowing all tricks of style at thirty-one,
And weary of them, while Antonio
At sixty-nine wrought placidly his best
Making the violin you heard to-day —
Naldo would tease him oft to tell his aims.
"Perhaps thou hast some pleasant vice to feed —
The love of louis d'ors in heaps of four,
Each violin a heap — I've nought to blame;
My vices waste such heaps. But then, why work
With painful nicety? Since fame once earned
By luck or merit — oftenest by luck —
(Else why do I put Bonifazio's name
To work that '*pinxit Naldo*' would not sell?)
Is welcome index to the wealthy mob
Where they should pay their gold, and where they pay
There they find merit — take your tow for flax,
And hold the flax unlabeled with your name,
Too coarse for sufferance."

Antonio then:
"I like the gold — well, yes — but not for meals.
And as my stomach, so my eye and hand,
And inward sense that works along with both,
Have hunger that can never feed on coin.
Who draws a line and satisfies his soul,
Making it crooked where it should be straight?
An idiot with an oyster-shell may draw
His lines along the sand, all wavering,
Fixing no point or pathway to a point;
An idiot one remove may choose his line,
Straggle and be content; but God be praised,
Antonio Stradivari has an eye
That winces at false work and loves the true,
With hand and arm that play upon the tool
As willingly as any singing bird

Sets him to sing his morning roundelay,
Because he likes to sing and likes the song."

Then Naldo: "'Tis a pretty kind of fame
At best, that comes of making violins;
And saves no masses, either. Thou wilt go
To purgatory none the less."

But he:
"'Twere purgatory here to make them ill;
And for my fame—when any master holds
'Twixt chin and hand a violin of mine,
He will be glad that Stradivari lived,
Made violins, and made them of the best.
The masters only know whose work is good;
They will choose mine, and while God gives them skill
I give them instruments to play upon,
God choosing me to help Him."

"What! were God
At fault for violins, thou absent?"

"Yes;
He were at fault for Stradivari's work."

"Why, many hold Giuseppe's violins
As good as thine."

"May be; they are different.
His quality declines; he spoils his hand
With over-drinking. But were his the best,
He could not work for two. My work is mine,
And, heresy or not, if my hand slacked
I should rob God—since He is fullest good—
Leaving a blank instead of violins.
I say, not God Himself can make man's best
Without best men to help Him. I am one best
Here in Cremona, using sunlight well
To fashion finest maple till it serves
More cunningly than throats, for harmony.
'Tis rare delight; I would not change my skill
To be the Emperor with bungling hands,
And lose my work, which comes as natural
As self at waking."

"Thou art little more
Than a deft potter's wheel, Antonio;
Turning out work by mere necessity
And lack of varied function. Higher arts
Subsist on freedom—eccentricity—

Uncounted inspirations—influence
That comes with drinking, gambling, talk turned wild,
Then moody misery and lack of food—
With every dithyrambic fine excess;
These make at last a storm which flashes out
In lightning revelations. Steady work
Turns genius to a loom; the soul must lie
Like grapes beneath the sun till ripeness comes
And mellow vintage. I could paint you now
The finest Crucifixion; yesternight
Returning home I saw it on a sky.
Blue-black, thick-starred. I want two louis d'ors
To buy the canvas and the costly blues—
Trust me a fortnight."

"Where are those last two
I lent thee for thy Judith?—her thou saw'st
In saffron gown, with Holofernes' head
And beauty all complete?"

"She is but sketched;
I lack the proper model—and the mood.
A great idea is an eagle's egg,
Craves time for hatching; while the eagle sits
Feed her."

"If thou wilt call thy pictures eggs
I call the hatching, Work. 'Tis God gives skill,
But not without men's hands; He could not make
Antonio Stradivari's violins
Without Antonio. Get thee to thy easel."

A COLLEGE BREAKFAST-PARTY.

YOUNG Hamlet, not the hesitating Dane,
But one named after him, who lately strove
For honors at our English Wittenberg,—
Blonde, metaphysical, and sensuous,
Questioning all things and yet half convinced
Credulity were better; held inert
'Twixt fascinations of all opposites,
And half suspecting that the mightiest soul
(Perhaps his own?) was union of extremes,
Having no choice but choice of everything:
As, drinking deep to-day for love of wine,
To-morrow half a Brahmin, scorning life
As mere illusion, yearning for that True
Which has no qualities; another day
Finding the fount of grace in sacraments,
And purest reflex of the light divine
In gem-bossed pyx and broidered chasuble,
Resolved to wear no stockings and to fast
With arms extended, waiting ecstasy;
But getting cramps instead, and needing change,
A would-be pagan next:—
Young Hamlet sat
A guest with five of somewhat riper age
At breakfast with Horatio, a friend
With few opinions, but of faithful heart,
Quick to detect the fibrous spreading roots
Of character that feed men's theories,
Yet cloaking weaknesses with charity
And ready in all service save rebuke.

With ebb of breakfast and the cider-cup
Came high debate: the others seated there
Were Osric, spinner of fine sentences,
A delicate insect creeping over life
Feeding on molecules of floral breath,
And weaving gossamer to trap the sun;
Laertes ardent, rash, and radical;
Discursive Rosencranz, grave Guildenstern,
And he for whom the social meal was made—

The polished priest, a tolerant listener,
Disposed to give a hearing to the lost,
And breakfast with them ere they went below.

From alpine metaphysic glaciers first
The talk sprang copious; the themes were old,
But so is human breath, so infant eyes,
The daily nurslings of creative light.
Small words held mighty meanings: Matter, Force,
Self, Not-self, Being, Seeming, Space and Time—
Plebeian toilers on the dusty road
Of daily traffic, turned to Genii
And cloudy giants darkening sun and moon.
Creation was reversed in human talk:
None said, "Let Darkness be," but Darkness was;
And in it weltered with Teutonic ease,
An argumentative Leviathan,
Blowing cascades from out his element,
The thunderous Rosencranz, till
"Truce, I beg!"
Said Osric, with nice accent. "I abhor
That battling of the ghosts, that strife of terms
For utmost lack of color, form, and breath,
That tasteless squabbling called Philosophy:
As if a blue-winged butterfly afloat
For just three days above the Italian fields,
Instead of sipping at the heart of flowers,
Poising in sunshine, fluttering toward its bride,
Should fast and speculate, considering
What were if it were not? or what now is
Instead of that which seems to be itself?
Its deepest wisdom surely were to be
A sipping, marrying, blue-winged butterfly;
Since utmost speculation on itself
Were but a three days' living of worse sort—
A bruising struggle all within the bounds
Of butterfly existence."
"I protest,"
Burst in Laertes, "against arguments
That start with calling me a butterfly,
A bubble, spark, or other metaphor
Which carries your conclusions as a phrase
In quibbling law will carry property.
Put a thin sucker for my human lips
Fed at a mother's breast, who now needs food

That I will earn for her; put bubbles blown
From frothy thinking, for the joy, the love,
The wants, the pity, and the fellowship
(The ocean deeps I might say, were I bent
On bandying metaphors) that make a man—
Why, rhetoric brings within your easy reach
Conclusions worthy of—a butterfly.
The universe, I hold, is no charade,
No acted pun unriddled by a word,
Nor pain a decimal diminishing
With hocus-pocus of a dot or nought.
For those who know it, pain is solely pain:
Not any letters of the alphabet
Wrought syllogistically pattern-wise,
Nor any cluster of fine images,
Nor any missing of their figured dance
By blundering molecules. Analysis
May show you the right physic for the ill,
Teaching the molecules to find their dance,
But spare me your analogies, that hold
Such insight as the figure of a crow
And bar of music put to signify
A crowbar."

Said the Priest, "There I agree—
Would add that sacramental grace is grace
Which to be known must first be felt, with all
The strengthening influxes that come by prayer.
I note this passingly—would not delay
The conversation's tenor, save to hint
That taking stand with Rosencranz one sees
Final equivalence of all we name
Our Good and Ill—their difference meanwhile
Being inborn prejudice that plumps you down
An Ego, brings a weight into your scale
Forcing a standard. That resistless weight
Obstinate, irremovable by thought,
Persisting through disproof, an ache, a need
That spaceless stays where sharp analysis
Has shown a plenum filled without it—what
If this, to use your phrase, were just that Being
Not looking solely, grasping from the dark,
Weighing the difference you call Ego? This
Gives you persistence, regulates the flux
With strict relation rooted in the All.
Who is he of your late philosophers

Takes the true name of Being to be Will?
I—nay, the Church objects nought, is content:
Reason has reached its utmost negative,
Physic and metaphysic meet in the inane
And backward shrink to intense prejudice,
Making their absolute and homogene
A loaded relative, a choice to be
Whatever is—supposed, a What is not.
The Church demands no more, has standing room
And basis for her doctrine: this (no more)—
That the strong bias which we name the Soul,
Though fed and clad by dissoluble waves
Has antecedent quality, and rules
By veto or consent the strife of thought,
Making arbitrament that we call faith."
Here was brief silence, till young Hamlet spoke.
"I crave direction, Father, how to know
The sign of that imperative whose right
To sway my act in face of thronging doubts
Were an oracular gem in price beyond
Urim and Thummim lost to Israel.
That bias of the soul, that conquering die
Loaded with golden emphasis of Will—
How find it where resolve, once made, becomes
The rash exclusion of an opposite
Which draws the stronger as I turn aloof."

"I think I hear a bias in your words,"
The Priest said mildly,—"that strong natural bent
Which we call hunger. What more positive
Than appetite?—of spirit or of flesh,
I care not—'sense of need' were truer phrase.
You hunger for authoritative right,
And yet discern no difference of tones,
No weight of rod that marks imperial rule?
Laertes granting, I will put your case
In analogic form: the doctors hold
Hunger which gives no relish—save caprice
That tasting venison fancies mellow pears—
A symptom of disorder, and prescribe
Strict discipline. Were I physician here
I would prescribe that exercise of soul
Which lies in full obedience: you ask,
Obedience to what? The answer lies
Within the word itself; for how obey

What has no rule, asserts no absolute claim?
Take inclination, taste—why, that is you,
No rule above you. Science, reasoning
On nature's order—they exist and move
Solely by disputation, hold no pledge
Of final consequence, but push the swing
Where Epicurus and the Stoic sit
In endless see-saw. One authority,
And only one, says simply this, Obey:
Place yourself in that current (test it so!)
Of spiritual order where at least
Lies promise of a high communion,
A Head informing members, Life that breathes
With gift of forces over and above
The *plus* of arithmetic interchange.
'The Church too has a body,' you object,
'Can be dissected, put beneath the lens
And shown the merest continuity
Of all existence else beneath the sun.'
I grant you; but the lens will not disprove
A presence which eludes it. Take your wit,
Your highest passion, widest-reaching thought:
Show their conditions if you will or can,
But though you saw the final atom-dance
Making each molecule that stands for sign
Of love being present, where is still your love?
How measure that, how certify its weight?
And so I say, the body of the Church
Carries a Presence, promises and gifts
Never disproved—whose argument is found
In lasting failure of the search elsewhere
For what it holds to satisfy man's need.
But I grow lengthy: my excuse must be
Your question, Hamlet, which has probed right through
To the pith of our belief. And I have robbed
Myself of pleasure as a listener.
'Tis noon, I see; and my appointment stands
For half-past twelve with Voltimand. Good-bye."

Brief parting, brief regret—sincere, but quenched
In fumes of best Havana, which consoles
For lack of other certitude. Then said,
Mildly sarcastic, quiet Guildenstern:
"I marvel how the Father gave new charm

To weak conclusions: I was half convinced
The poorest reasoner made the finest man,
And held his logic lovelier for its limp."

"I fain would hear," said Hamlet, "how you find
A stronger footing than the Father gave.
How base your self-resistance save on faith
In some invisible Order, higher Right
Than changing impulse. What does Reason bid?
To take a fullest rationality
What offers best solution: so the Church.
Science, detecting hydrogen aflame
Outside our firmament, leaves mystery
Whole and untouched beyond; nay, in our blood
And in the potent atoms of each germ
The Secret lives—envelops, penetrates
Whatever sense perceives or thought divines.
Science, whose soul is explanation, halts
With hostile front at mystery. The Church
Takes mystery as her empire, brings its wealth
Of possibility to fill the void
'Twixt contradictions—warrants so a faith
Defying sense and all its ruthless train
Of arrogant 'Therefores.' Science with her lens
Dissolves the Forms that made the other half
Of all our love, which thenceforth widowed lives
To gaze with maniac stare at what is not.
The Church explains not, governs—feeds resolve
By vision fraught with heart-experience
And human yearning."

"Ay," said Guildenstern,
With friendly nod, "the Father, I can see,
Has caught you up in his air-chariot.
His thought takes rainbow-bridges, out of reach
By solid obstacles, evaporates
The coarse and common into subtilties,
Insists that what is real in the Church
Is something out of evidence, and begs
(Just in parenthesis) you'll never mind
What stares you in the face and bruises you.
Why, by his method I could justify
Each superstition and each tyranny
That ever rode upon the back of man,
Pretending fitness for his sole defense

Against life's evil. How can aught subsist
That holds no theory of gain or good?
Despots with terror in their red right hand
Must argue good to helpers and themselves,
Must let submission hold a core of gain
To make their slaves choose life. Their theory,
Abstracting inconvenience of racks,
Whip-lashes, dragonnades and all things coarse
Inherent in the fact or concrete mass,
Presents the pure idea—utmost good
Secured by Order only to be found
In strict subordination, hierarchy
Of forces where, by nature's law, the strong
Has rightful empire, rule of weaker proved
Mere dissolution. What can you object?
The Inquisition—if you turn away
From narrow notice how the scent of gold
Has guided sense of damning heresy—
The Inquisition is sublime, is love
Hindering the spread of poison in men's souls:
The flames are nothing: only smaller pain
To hinder greater, or the pain of one
To save the many, such as throbs at heart
Of every system born into the world.
So of the Church as high communion
Of Head with members, fount of spirit force
Beyond the calculus, and carrying proof
In her sole power to satisfy man's need:
That seems ideal truth as clear as lines
That, necessary though invisible, trace
The balance of the planets and the sun—
Until I find a hitch in that last claim.
'To satisfy man's need.' Sir, that depends:
We settle first the measure of man's need
Before we grant capacity to fill.
John, James, or Thomas, you may satisfy:
But since you choose ideals I demand
Your Church shall satisfy ideal man,
His utmost reason and his utmost love.
And say these rest a-hungered—find no scheme
Content them both, but hold the world accursed,
A Calvary where Reason mocks at Love,
And Love forsaken sends out orphan cries
Hopeless of answer; still the soul remains
Larger, diviner than your half-way Church,

Which racks your reason into false consent,
And soothes your Love with sops of selfishness."

"There I am with you," cried Laertes. "What
To me are any dictates, though they came
With thunders from the Mount, if still within
I see a higher Right, a higher Good
Compelling love and worship? Though the earth
Held force electric to discern and kill
Each thinking rebel—what is martyrdom
But death-defying utterance of belief,
Which being mine remains my truth supreme
Though solitary as the throb of pain
Lying outside the pulses of the world?
Obedience is good: ay, but to what?
And for what ends? For say that I rebel
Against your rule as devilish, or as rule
Of thunder-guiding powers that deny
Man's highest benefit: rebellion then
Were strict obedience to another rule
Which bids me flout your thunder."

"Lo you now!"
Said Osric, delicately, "how you come,
Laertes mine, with all your warring zeal
As Python-slayer of the present age—
Cleansing all social swamps by darting rays
Of dubious doctrine, hot with energy
Of private judgment and disgust for doubt—
To state my thesis, which you most abhor
When sung in Daphnis-notes beneath the pines
To gentle rush of waters. Your belief—
In essence, what is it but simple Taste?
I urge with you exemption from all claims
That come from other than my proper will,
An Ultimate within to balance yours,
A solid meeting you, excluding you,
Till you show fuller force by entering
My spiritual space and crushing Me
To a subordinate complement of You:
Such ultimate must stand alike for all.
Preach your crusade, then: all will join who like
The hurly-burly of aggressive creeds;
Still your unpleasant Ought, your itch to choose
What grates upon the sense, is simply Taste,

Differs, I think, from mine (permit the word,
Discussion forces it) in being bad."

The tone was too polite to breed offense,
Showing a tolerance of what was "bad"
Becoming courtiers. Louder Rosencranz
Took up the ball with rougher movement, wont
To show contempt for doting reasoners
Who hugged some reasons with a preference,
As warm Laertes did: he gave five puffs
Intolerantly skeptical, then said,
"Your human good, which you would make supreme,
How do you know it? Has it shown its face
In adamantine type, with features clear,
As this republic, or that monarchy?
As federal grouping or municipal?
Equality, or finely shaded lines
Of social difference? ecstatic whirl
And draught intense of passionate joy and pain,
Or sober self-control that starves its youth
And lives to wonder what the world calls joy?
Is it in sympathy that shares men's pangs,
Or in cool brains that can explain them well?
Is it in labor or in laziness?
In training for the tug of rivalry
To be admired, or in the admiring soul?
In risk or certitude? In battling rage
And hardy challenges of Protean luck,
Or in a sleek and rural apathy
Full fed with sameness? Pray define your Good
Beyond rejection by majority;
Next, how it may subsist without the Ill
Which seems its only outline. Show a world
Of pleasure not resisted; or a world
Of pressure equalized, yet various
In action formative; for that will serve
As illustration of your human good—
Which at its perfecting (your goal of hope)
Will not be straight extinct, or fall to sleep
In the deep bosom of the Unchangeable.
What will you work for, then, and call it good
With full and certain vision—good for aught
Save partial ends which happen to be yours?
How will you get your stringency to bind
Thought or desire in demonstrated tracks

Which are but waves within a balanced whole?
Is 'relative' the magic word that turns
Your flux mercurial of good to gold?
Why, that analysis at which you rage
As anti-social force that sweeps you down
The world in one cascade of molecules,
Is brother 'relative'—and grins at you
Like any convict whom you thought to send
Outside society, till this enlarged
And meant New England and Australia too.
The Absolute is your shadow, and the space
Which you say might be real, were you milled
To curves pellicular, the thinnest thin,
Equation of no thickness, is still you."

"Abstracting all that makes him clubbable,"
Horatio interposed. But Rosencranz,
Deaf as the angry turkey-cock whose ears
Are plugged by swollen tissue when he scolds
At men's pretensions: "Pooh, your 'Relative'
Shuts you in, hopeless, with your progeny
As in a Hunger-tower; your social good,
Like other deities by turn supreme,
Is transient reflex of a prejudice,
Anthology of causes and effects
To suit the mood of fanatics who lead
The mood of tribes or nations. I admit
If you could show a sword, nay, chance of sword
Hanging conspicuous to their inward eyes
With edge so constant threatening as to sway
All greed and lust by terror; and a law
Clear-writ and proven as the law supreme
Which that dread sword enforces—then your Right,
Duty, or social Good, were it once brought
To common measure with the potent law,
Would dip the scale, would put unchanging marks
Of wisdom or of folly on each deed,
And warrant exhortation. Until then,
Where is your standard or criterion?
What always, everywhere, by all men'—why
That were but Custom, and your system needs
Ideals never yet incorporate,
The imminent doom of Custom. Can you find
Appeal beyond the sentience in each man?
Frighten the blind with scarecrows? raise an awe

Of things unseen where appetite commands
Chambers of imagery in the soul
At all its avenues?—You chant your hymns
To Evolution, on your altar lay
A sacred egg called Progress: have you proved
A Best unique where all is relative,
And where each change is loss as well as gain?
The age of healthy Saurians, well supplied
With heat and prey, will balance well enough
A human age where maladies are strong
And pleasures feeble; wealth a monster gorged
Mid hungry populations; intellect
Aproned in laboratories, bent on proof
That *this* is *that* and both are good for naught
Save feeding error through a weary life;
While Art and Poesy struggle like poor ghosts
To hinder cock-crow and the dreadful light,
Lurking in darkness and the charnel-house,
Or like two stalwart graybeards, imbecile
With limbs still active, playing at belief
That hunt the slipper, foot-ball, hide-and-seek,
Are sweetly merry, donning pinafores
And lisping emulously in their speech.
O human race! Is this then all thy gain?—
Working at disproof, playing at belief,
Debate on causes, distaste of effects,
Power to transmute all elements, and lack
Of any power to sway the fatal skill
And make thy lot aught else than rigid doom?
The Saurians were better.—Guildenstern,
Pass me the taper. Still the human curse
Has mitigation in the best cigars."
Then swift Laertes, not without a glare
Of leonine wrath, "I thank thee for that word:
That one confession, were I Socrates,
Should force you onward till you ran your head
At your own image—flatly gave the lie
To all your blasphemy of that human good
Which bred and nourished you to sit at ease
And learnedly deny it. Say the world
Groans ever with the pangs of doubtful births:
Say, life's a poor donation at the best—
Wisdom a yearning after nothingness—
Nature's great vision and the thrill supreme
Of thought-fed passion but a weary play—

I argue not against you. Who can prove
Wit to be witty when the deeper ground
Dullness intuitive declares wit dull?
If life is worthless to you—why, it is.
You only know how little love you feel
To give you fellowship, how little force
Responsive to the quality of things.
Then end your life, throw off the unsought yoke
If not—if you remain to taste cigars,
Choose racy diction, perorate at large
With tacit scorn of meaner men who win
No wreath or tripos—then admit at least
A possible Better in the seeds of earth;
Acknowledge debt to that laborious life
Which, sifting evermore the mingled seeds,
Testing the Possible with patient skill,
And daring ill in presence of a good
For futures to inherit, made your lot
One you would choose rather than end it, nay,
Rather than, say, some twenty million lots
Of fellow-Britons toiling all to make
That nation, that community, whereon
You feed and thrive and talk philosophy.
I am no optimist whose fate must hang
On hard pretense that pain is beautiful
And agony explained for men at ease
By virtue's exercise in pitying it.
But this I hold: that he who takes one gift
Made for him by the hopeful work of man,
Who tastes sweet bread, walks where he will unarmed,
His shield and warrant the invisible law,
Who owns a hearth and household charities,
Who clothes his body and his sentient soul
With skill and thoughts of men, and yet denies
A human good worth toiling for, is cursed
With worse negation than the poet feigned
In Mephistopheles. The Devil spins
His wire-drawn argument against all good
With sense of brimstone as his private lot,
And never drew a solace from the earth."

Laertes fuming paused, and Guildenstern
Took up with cooler skill the fusillade;
"I meet your deadliest challenge, Rosencranz—
Where get, you say, a binding law, a rule

Enforced by sanction, an ideal throned
With thunder in its hand? I answer, there
Whence every faith and rule has drawn its force
Since human consciousness awaking owned
An outward, whose unconquerable sway
Resisted first and then subdued desire
By pressure of the dire impossible,
Urging to possible ends the active soul
And shaping so its terror and its love.
Why, you have said it—threats and promises
Depend on each man's sentience for their force;
All sacred rules, imagined or revealed,
Can have no form or potency apart
From the percipient and emotive mind.
God, duty, love, submission, fellowship,
Must first be framed in man, as music is,
Before they live outside him as a law.
And still they grow and shape themselves anew,
With fuller concentration in their life
Of inward and of outward energies,
Blending to make the last result called man,
Which means, not this or that philosopher
Looking through beauty into blankness, not
The swindler who has sent his fruitful lie
By the last telegram; it means the tide
Of needs reciprocal, toil, trust, and love—
The surging multitude of human claims
Which make "a presence not to be put by"
Above the horizon of the general soul.
Is inward reason shrunk to subtleties,
And inward wisdom pining passion-starved?
The outward reason has the world in store,
Regenerates passion with the stress of want,
Regenerates knowledge with discovery,
Shows sly rapacious self a blunderer,
Widens dependence, knits the social whole
In sensible relation more defined.
Do boards and dirty-handed millionaires
Govern the planetary system—sway
The pressure of the Universe—decide
That man henceforth shall retrogresss to ape,
Emptied of every sympathetic thrill
The all has wrought up in him? dam up henceforth
The flood of human claims as private force
To turn their wheels and make a private hell

For fishpond to their mercantile domain?
What are they but a parasitic growth
On the vast real and ideal world
Of man and nature blent in one divine?
Why, take your closing dirge—say evil grows
And good is dwindling; science mere decay,
Mere dissolution of ideal wholes
Which through the ages past alone have made
The earth and firmament of human faith;
Say, the small arc of being we call man
Is near its mergence, what seems growing life
Nought but a hurrying change toward lower types,
The ready rankness of degeneracy.
Well, they who mourn for the world's dying good
May take their common sorrows for a rock,
On it erect religion and a church,
A worship, rites, and passionate piety—
The worship of the best though crucified
And God-forsaken in its dying pangs;
The sacramental rites of fellowship
In common woe; visions that purify
Through admiration and despairing love
Which keep their spiritual life intact
Beneath the murderous clutches of disproof
And feed a martyr-strength."

"Religion high!"
(Rosencranz here) "but with communicants
Few as the cedars upon Lebanon—
A child might count them. What the world demands
Is faith coercive of the multitude."

"Tush, Guildenstern, you granted him too much,"
Burst in Laertes; "I will never grant
One inch of law to feeble blasphemies
Which hold no higher ratio to life—
Full vigorous human life that peopled earth
And wrought and fought and loved and bravely died—
Than the sick morning glooms of debauchees.
Old nations breed old children, wizened babes
Whose youth is languid and incredulous,
Weary of life without the will to die;
Their passions visionary appetites
Of bloodless spectres wailing that the world
For lack of substance slips from out their grasp;

Their thoughts the withered husks of all things dead,
Holding no force of germs instinct with life,
Which never hesitates but moves and grows.
Yet hear them boast in screams their godlike ill,
Excess of knowing! Fie on you, Rosencranz!
You lend your brains and fine-dividing tongue
For bass-notes to this shriveled crudity,
This immature decrepitude that strains
To fill our ears and claim the prize of strength
For mere unmanliness. Out on them all!—
Wits, puling minstrels, and philosophers,
Who living softly prate of suicide,
And suck the commonwealth to feed their ease
While they vent epigrams and threnodies,
Mocking or wailing all the eager work
Which makes that public store whereon they feed.
Is wisdom flattened sense and mere distaste?
Why, any superstition warm with love,
Inspired with purpose, wild with energy
That streams resistless through its ready frame,
Has more of human truth within its life
Than souls that look through color into naught,—
Whose brain, too unimpassioned for delight,
Has feeble ticklings of a vanity
Which finds the universe beneath its mark,
And scorning the blue heavens as merely blue
Can only say, 'What then?'—pre-eminent
In wondrous want of likeness to their kind,
Founding that worship of sterility
Whose one supreme is vacillating Will
Which makes the Light, then says, ''Twere better not.'"

Here rash Laertes brought his Handel-strain
As of some angry Polypheme, to pause;
And Osric, shocked at ardors out of taste,
Relieved the audience with a tenor voice
And delicate delivery.
"For me,
I range myself in line with Rosencranz
Against all schemes, religious or profane,
That flaunt a Good as pretext for a lash
To flog us all who have the better taste,
Into conformity, requiring me
At peril of the thong and sharp disgrace

To care how mere Philistines pass their lives;
Whether the English pauper-total grows
From one to two before the naughts; how far
Teuton will outbreed Roman; if the class
Of proletaires will make a federal band
To bind all Europe and America,
Throw, in their wrestling, every government,
Snatch the world's purse and keep the guillotine:
Or else (admitting these are casualties)
Driving my soul with scientific hail
That shuts the landscape out with particles;
Insisting that the Palingenesis
Means telegraphs and measure of the rate
At which the stars move—nobody knows where.
So far, my Rosencranz, we are at one.
But not when you blaspheme the life of Art,
The sweet perennial youth of Poesy,
Which asks no logic but its sensuous growth,
No right but loveliness; which fearless strolls
Betwixt the burning mountain and the sea,
Reckless of earthquake and the lava stream,
Filling its hour with beauty. It knows naught
Of bitter strife, denial, grim resolve,
Sour resignation, busy emphasis
Of fresh illusions named the new-born True,
Old Error's latest child; but as a lake
Images all things, yet within its depths
Dreams them all lovelier — thrills with sound
And makes a harp of plenteous liquid chords —
So Art or Poesy: we its votaries
Are the Olympians, fortunately born
From the elemental mixture; 'tis our lot
To pass more swiftly than the Delian God,
But still the earth breaks into flowers for us,
And mortal sorrows when they reach our ears
Are dying falls to melody divine.
Hatred, war, vice, crime, sin, those human storms,
Cyclones, floods, what you will—outbursts of force—
Feed art with contrast, give the grander touch
To the master's pencil and the poet's song,
Serve as Vesuvian fires or navies tossed
On yawning waters, which when viewed afar
Deepen the calm sublime of those choice souls
Who keep the heights of poesy, and turn
A fleckless mirror to the various world,

Giving its many-named and fitful flux
An imaged, harmless, spiritual life,
With pure selection, native to art's frame,
Of beauty only, save its minor scale
Of ill and pain to give the ideal joy
A keener edge. This is a mongrel globe;
All finer being wrought from its coarse earth
Is but accepted privilege: what else
Your boasted virtue, which proclaims itself
A good above the average consciousness?
Nature exists by partiality
(Each planet's poise must carry two extremes
With verging breadths of minor wretchedness):
We are her favorites and accept our wings.
For your accusal, Rosencranz, that art
Shares in the dread and weakness of the time,
I hold it null; since art or poesy pure,
Being blameless by all standards save her own,
Takes no account of modern or antique
In morals, science, or philosophy:
No dull elenchus makes a yoke for her,
Whose law and measure are the sweet consent
Of sensibilities that move apart
From rise or fall of systems, states or creeds —
Apart from what Philistines call man's weal."

"Ay, we all know those votaries of the Muse
Ravished with singing till they quite forgot
Their manhood, sang, and gaped, and took no food,
Then died of emptiness, and for reward
Lived on as grasshoppers" — Laertes thus:
But then he checked himself as one who feels
His muscles dangerous, and Guildenstern
Filled up the pause with calmer confidence.

"You use your wings, my Osric, poise yourself
Safely outside all reach of argument,
Then dogmatise at will (a method known
To ancient women and philosophers,
Nay, to Philistines whom you most abhor);
Else, could an arrow reach you, I should ask
Whence came taste, beauty, sensibilities
Refined to preference infallible?
Doubtless, ye're gods — these odors ye inhale,
A sacrificial scent. But how, I pray,

Are odors made, if not by gradual change
Of sense or substance? Is your beautiful
A seedless, rootless flower, or has it grown
With human growth, which means the rising sum
Of human struggle, order, knowledge? — sense
Trained to a fuller record, more exact —
To truer guidance of each passionate force?
Get me your roseate flesh without the blood;
Get fine aromas without structure wrought
From simpler being into manifold:
Then and then only flaunt your Beautiful
As what can live apart from thought, creeds, states,
Which mean life's structure. Osric, I beseech —
The infallible should be more catholic —
Join in a war-dance with the cannibals,
Hear Chinese music, love a face tattooed,
Give adoration to a pointed skull,
And think the Hindu Siva looks divine:
'Tis art, 'tis poesy. Say, you object:
How came you by that lofty dissidence,
If not through changes in the social man
Widening his consciousness from Here and Now
To larger wholes beyond the reach of sense;
Controlling to a fuller harmony
The thrill of passion and the rule of fact;
And paling false ideals in the light
Of full-rayed sensibilities which blend
Truth and desire? Taste, beauty, what are they
But the soul's choice toward perfect bias wrought
By finer balance of a fuller growth—
Sense brought to subtlest metamorphosis
Through love, thought, joy—the general human store
Which grows from all life's functions? As the plant
Holds its corolla, purple, delicate,
Solely as outflush of that energy
Which moves transformingly in root and branch."

Guildenstern paused, and Hamlet quivering
Since Osric spoke, in transit imminent
From catholic striving into laxity,
Ventured his word. "Seems to me, Guildenstern,
Your argument, though shattering Osric's point
That sensibilities can move apart
From social order, yet has not annulled
His thesis that the life of poesy

(Admitting it must grow from out the whole)
Has separate functions, a transfigured realm
Freed from the rigors of the practical,
Where what is hidden from the grosser world—
Stormed down by roar of engines and the shouts
Of eager concourse—rises beauteous
As voice of water-drops in sapphire caves;
A realm where finest spirits have free sway
In exquisite selection, uncontrolled
By hard material necessity
Of cause and consequence. For you will grant
The Ideal has discoveries which ask
No test, no faith, save that we joy in them;
A new-found continent, with spreading lands
Where pleasure charters all, where virtue, rank,
Use, right, and truth have but one name, Delight.
Thus Art's creations, when etherealized
To least admixture of the grosser fact
Delight may stamp as highest."

"Possible!"
Said Guildenstern, with touch of weariness,
"But then we might dispute of what is gross,
What high, what low."

"Nay," said Laertes, "ask
The mightiest makers who have reigned, still reign
Within the ideal realm. See if their thought
Be drained of practice and the thick warm blood
Of hearts that beat in action various
Through the wide drama of the struggling world.
Good-bye, Horatio."

Each now said "Good-bye."
Such breakfast, such beginning of the day
Is more than half the whole. The sun was hot
On southward branches of the meadow elms,
The shadows slowly farther crept and veered
Like changing memories, and Hamlet strolled
Alone and dubious on the empurpled path
Between the waving grasses of new June
Close by the stream where well-compacted boats
Were moored or moving with a lazy creak
To the soft dip of oars. All sounds were light
As tiny silver bells upon the robes
Of hovering silence. Birds made twitterings
That seemed but Silence self o'erfull of love,

'Twas invitation all to sweet repose;
And Hamlet, drowsy with the mingled draughts
Of cider and conflicting sentiments,
Chose a green couch and watched with half-closed eyes
The meadow-road, the stream and dreamy lights,
Until they merged themselves in sequence strange
With undulating ether, time, the soul,
The will supreme, the individual claim,
The social Ought, the lyrist's liberty,
Democritus, Pythagoras, in talk
With Anselm, Darwin, Comte, and Schopenhauer,
The poets rising slow from out their tombs
Summoned as arbiters—that border-world
Of dozing, ere the sense is fully locked.

And then he dreamed a dream so luminous
He woke (he says) convinced; but what it taught
Withholds as yet. Perhaps those graver shades
Admonished him that visions told in haste
Part with their virtues to the squandering lips
And leave the soul in wider emptiness.

TWO LOVERS.

Two lovers by a moss-grown spring:
They leaned soft cheeks together there,
Mingled the dark and sunny hair,
And heard the wooing thrushes sing.
O budding time!
O love's blest prime!

Two wedded from the portal stepped:
The bells made happy carolings,
The air was soft as fanning wings,
White petals on the pathway slept.
O pure-eyed bride!
O tender pride!

Two faces o'er a cradle bent:
Two hands above the head were locked;
These pressed each other while they rocked,
Those watched a life that love had sent.
O solemn hour!
O hidden power!

Two parents by the evening fire:
The red light fell about their knees
On heads that rose by slow degrees
Like buds upon the lily spire.
O patient life!
O tender strife!

The two still sat together there,
The red light shone about their knees;
But all the heads by slow degrees
Had gone and left that lonely pair.
O voyage fast!
O vanished past!

The red light shone upon the floor
And made the space between them wide;
They drew their chairs up side by side,
Their pale cheeks joined, and said, "Once more!"
O memories!
O past that is!

SELF AND LIFE.

SELF.

CHANGEFUL comrade, Life of mine,
Before we two must part,
I will tell thee, thou shalt say,
What thou hast been and art.
Ere I lose my hold of thee
Justify thyself to me.

LIFE.

I was thy warmth upon thy mother's knee
When light and love within her eyes were one;
We laughed together by the laurel-tree,
Culling warm daisies 'neath the sloping sun;

We heard the chickens' lazy croon,
Where the trellised woodbines grew,
And all the summer afternoon
Mystic gladness o'er thee threw.
Was it person? Was it thing?
Was it touch or whispering?
It was bliss and it was I:
Bliss was what thou knew'st me by.

SELF.

Soon I knew thee more by Fear
And sense of what was not,
Haunting all I held most dear;
I had a double lot:
Ardor, cheated with alloy,
Wept the more for dreams of joy.

LIFE.

Remember how thy ardor's magic sense
Made poor things rich to thee and small things great;
How hearth and garden, field and bushy fence,
Were thy own eager love incorporate;

And how the solemn, splendid Past
O'er thy early widened earth
Made grandeur, as on sunset cast
Dark elms near take mighty girth.
Hands and feet were tiny still
When we knew the historic thrill,
Breathed deep breath in heroes dead,
Tasted the immortals' bread.

SELF.

Seeing what I might have been
Reproved the thing I was,
Smoke on heaven's clearest sheen,
The speck within the rose.
By revered ones' frailties stung
Reverence was with anguish wrung.

LIFE.

But all thy anguish and thy discontent
Was growth of mine, the elemental strife
Toward feeling manifold with vision blent
To wider thought: I was no vulgar life

That, like the water-mirrored ape,
Not discerns the thing it sees,
Nor knows its own in others' shape,
Railing, scorning, at its ease.
Half man's truth must hidden lie
If unlit by Sorrow's eye.
I by Sorrow wrought in thee
Willing pain of ministry.

SELF.

Slowly was the lesson taught
Through passion, error, care;
Insight was with loathing fraught
And effort with despair.
Written on the wall I saw
"Bow!" I knew, not loved, the law.

LIFE.

But then I brought a love that wrote within
The law of gratitude, and made thy heart

Beat to the heavenly tune of seraphin
Whose only joy in having is, to impart:

Till thou, poor Self—despite thy ire,
Wrestling 'gainst my mingled share,
Thy faults, hard falls, and vain desire
Still to be what others were—
Filled, o'erflowed with tenderness
Seeming more as thou wert less,
Knew me through that anguish past
As a fellowship more vast.

SELF.

Yea, I embrace thee, changeful Life!
Far-sent, unchosen mate!
Self and thou, no more at strife,
Shall wed in hallowed state.
Willing spousals now shall prove
Life is justified by love.

"SWEET EVENINGS COME AND GO, LOVE."

"La noche buena se viene,
La noche buena se va,
Y nosotros nos iremos
Y no volveremos mas."

—Old *Villancico.*

SWEET evenings come and go, love,
They came and went of yore:
This evening of our life, love,
Shall go and come no more.

When we have passed away, love,
All things will keep their name;
But yet no life on earth, love,
With ours will be the same.

The daisies will be there, love,
The stars in heaven will shine:
I shall not feel thy wish, love,
Nor thou my hand in thine.

A better time will come, love,
And better souls be born:
I would not be the best, love,
To leave thee now forlorn.

THE DEATH OF MOSES.

Moses, who spake with God as with his friend,
And ruled his people with the twofold power
Of wisdom that can dare and still be meek,
Was writing his last word, the sacred name
Unutterable of that Eternal Will
Which was and is and evermore shall be.
Yet was his task not finished, for the flock
Needed its shepherd and the life-taught sage
Leaves no successor; but to chosen men,
The rescuers and guides of Israel,
A death was given called the Death of Grace,
Which freed them from the burden of the flesh
But left them rulers of the multitude
And loved companions of the lonely. This
Was God's last gift to Moses, this the hour
When soul must part from self and be but soul.

God spake to Gabriel, the messenger
Of mildest death that draws the parting life
Gently, as when a little rosy child
Lifts up its lips from off the bowl of milk
And so draws forth a curl that dipped its gold
In the soft white—thus Gabriel draws the soul.
"Go bring the soul of Moses unto me!"
And the awe-stricken angel answered, "Lord,
How shall I dare to take his life who lives
Soul of his kind, not to be likened once
In all the generations of the earth?"

Then God called Michaël, him of pensive brow,
Snow-vest and flaming sword, who knows and acts:
"Go bring the spirit of Moses unto me!"
But Michaël, with such grief as angels feel,
Loving the mortals whom they succor, plead:
"Almighty, spare me; it was I who taught
Thy servant Moses; he is part of me
As I of thy deep secrets, knowing them."

Then God called Zamaël, the terrible,
The angel of fierce death, of agony
That comes in battle and in pestilence
Remorseless, sudden or with lingering throes.
And Zamaël, his raiment and broad wings
Blood-tinctured, the dark lustre of his eyes
Shrouding the red, fell like the gathering night
Before the prophet. But that radiance
Won from the heavenly presence in the mount
Gleamed on the prophet's brow and dazzling pierced
Its conscious opposite: the angel turned
His murky gaze aloof and inly said:
"An angel this, deathless to angel's stroke."

But Moses felt the subtly nearing dark:—
"Who art thou? and what wilt thou?" Zamaël then:
"I am God's reaper; through the fields of life
I gather ripened and unripened souls
Both willing and unwilling. And I come
Now to reap thee." But Moses cried,
Firm as a seer who waits the trusted sign:
"Reap thou the fruitless plant and common herb—
Not him who from the womb was sanctified
To teach the law of purity and love."
And Zamaël baffled from his errand fled.

But Moses, pausing, in the air serene
Heard now that mystic whisper, far yet near,
The all-penetrating Voice, that said to him,
"Moses, the hour is come and thou must die."
"Lord, I obey; but thou rememberest
How thou, ineffable, didst take me once
Within thy orb of light untouched by death."
Then the voice answered, "Be no more afraid:
With me shall be thy death and burial."
So Moses waited, ready now to die.

And the Lord came, invisible as a thought,
Three angels gleaming on his secret track,
Prince Michaël, Zamaël, Gabriel, charged to guard
The soul-forsaken body as it fell
And bear it to the hidden sepulchre
Denied forever to the search of man.
And the Voice said to Moses: "Close thine eyes."

He closed them. "Lay thine hand upon thine heart,
And draw thy feet together." He obeyed.
And the Lord said, "O, spirit! child of mine!
A hundred years and twenty thou hast dwelt
Within this tabernacle wrought of clay.
This is the end: come forth and flee to heaven."

But the grieved soul with plaintive pleading cried,
"I love this body with a clinging love:
The courage fails me, Lord, to part from it."

"O child, come forth! for thou shalt dwell with me
About the immortal throne where seraphs joy
In growing vision and in growing love."

Yet hesitating, fluttering, like the bird
With young wing weak and dubious, the soul
Stayed. But behold! upon the death-dewed lips
A kiss descended, pure, unspeakable—
The bodiless Love without embracing Love
That lingered in the body, drew it forth
With heavenly strength and carried it to heaven.

But now beneath the sky the watchers all,
Angels that keep the homes of Israel
Or on high purpose wander o'er the world
Leading the Gentiles, felt a dark eclipse:
The greatest ruler among men was gone.
And from the westward sea was heard a wail,
A dirge as from the isles of Javanim,
Crying, "Who now is left upon the earth
Like him to teach the right and smite the wrong?"
And from the East, far o'er the Syrian waste,
Came slowlier, sadlier, the answering dirge:
"No prophet like him lives or shall arise
In Israel or the world forevermore."

But Israel waited, looking toward the mount,
Till with the deepening eve the elders came
Saying, "His burial is hid with God.
We stood far off and saw the angels lift
His corpse aloft until they seemed a star
That burned itself away within the sky."

The people answered with mute orphaned gaze
Looking for what had vanished evermore.
Then through the gloom without them and within
The spirit's shaping light, mysterious speech,
Invisible Will wrought clear in sculptured sound,
The thought-begotten daughter of the voice,
Thrilled on their listening sense: "He has no tomb.
He dwells not with you dead, but lives as Law."

ARION.

(HEROD. I. 24.)

ARION, whose melodic soul
Taught the dithyramb to roll
Like forest fires, and sing
Olympian suffering,

Had carried his diviner lore
From Corinth to the sister shore
Where Greece could largelier be,
Branching o'er Italy.

Then weighted with his glorious name
And bags of gold, aboard he came
'Mid harsh seafaring men
To Corinth bound again.

The sailors eyed the bags and thought:
"The gold is good, the man is naught—
And who shall track the wave
That opens for his grave?"

With brawny arms and cruel eyes
They press around him where he lies
In sleep beside his lyre,
Hearing the Muses choir.

He waked and saw this wolf-faced Death
Breaking the dream that filled his breath
With inspiration strong
Of yet unchanted song.

"Take, take my gold and let me live!"
He prayed, as kings do when they give
Their all with royal will,
Holding born kingship still.

To rob the living they refuse,
One death or other he must choose,
Either the watery pall
Or wounds and burial.

"My solemn robe then let me don,
Give me high space to stand upon,
That dying I may pour
A song unsung before."

It pleased them well to grant this prayer,
To hear for naught how it might fare
With men who paid their gold
For what a poet sold.

In flowing stole, his eyes aglow
With inward fire, he neared the prow
And took his god-like stand,
The cithara in hand.

The wolfish men all shrank aloof,
And feared this singer might be proof
Against their murderous power,
After his lyric hour.

But he, in liberty of song,
Fearless of death or other wrong,
With full spondaic toll
Poured forth his mighty soul:

Poured forth the strain his dream had taught,
A nome with lofty passion fraught
Such as makes battles won
On fields of Marathon.

The last long vowels trembled then
As awe within those wolfish men:
They said, with mutual stare,
Some god was present there.

But lo! Arion leaped on high
Ready, his descant done, to die;
Not asking, "Is it well?"
Like a pierced eagle fell.

"O MAY I JOIN THE CHOIR INVISIBLE."

Longum illud tempus, quum non ero, magis me movet, quam hoc exiguum.—CICERO, ad Att., xii. 18.

O MAY I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence: live
In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
For miserable aims that end with self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
And with their mild persistence urge man's search
To vaster issues.

So to live is heaven:
To make undying music in the world,
Breathing as beauteous order that controls
With growing sway the growing life of man.
So we inherit that sweet purity
For which we struggled, failed, and agonized
With widening retrospect that bred despair.
Rebellious flesh that would not be subdued,
A vicious parent shaming still its child
Poor anxious penitence, is quick dissolved;
Its discords, quenched by meeting harmonies,
Die in the large and charitable air.
And all our rarer, better, truer self,
That sobbed religiously in yearning song,
That watched to ease the burden of the world,
Laboriously tracing what must be,
And what may yet be better—saw within
A worthier image for the sanctuary,
And shaped it forth before the multitude
Divinely human, raising worship so
To higher reverence more mixed with love—
That better self shall live till human Time
Shall fold its eyelids, and the human sky
Be gathered like a scroll within the tomb
Unread forever.

This is life to come,
Which martyred men have made more glorious
For us to strive to follow. May I reach

That purest heaven, be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony,
Enkindle generous ardor, feed pure love,
Beget the smiles that have no cruelty—
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,
And in diffusion ever more intense.
So shall I join the choir invisible
Whose music is the gladness of the world.

THE SPANISH GYPSY.

This Work was first written in the winter of 1864–65; after a visit to Spain in 1867 it was rewritten and amplified. The reader conversant with Spanish poetry will see that in two of the Lyrics an attempt has been made to imitate the trochaic measure and assonance of the Spanish Ballad.

May, 1868.

THE SPANISH GYPSY.

BOOK I.

'Tis the warm South, where Europe spreads her lands
Like fretted leaflets, breathing on the deep:
Broad-breasted Spain, leaning with equal love
On the Mid Sea that moans with memories,
And on the untraveled Ocean's restless tides.
This river, shadowed by the battlements
And gleaming silvery toward the northern sky,
Feeds the famed stream that waters Andalus
And loiters, amorous of the fragrant air,
By Córdova and Seville to the bay
Fronting Algarva and the wandering flood
Of Guadiana. This deep mountain gorge
Slopes widening on the olive-pluméd plains
Of fair Granáda: one far-stretching arm
Points to Elvira, one to eastward heights
Of Alpujarras where the new-bathed Day
With oriflamme uplifted o'er the peaks
Saddens the breasts of northward-looking snows
That loved the night, and soared with soaring stars;
Flashing the signals of his nearing swiftness
From Almería's purple-shadowed bay
On to the far-off rocks that gaze and glow—
On to Alhambra, strong and ruddy heart
Of glorious Morisma, gasping now,
A maiméd giant in his agony.
This town that dips its feet within the stream,
And seems to sit a tower-crowned Cybele,
Spreading her ample robe adown the rocks,
Is rich Bedmár: 'twas Moorish long ago,
But now the Cross is sparkling on the Mosque,
And bells make Catholic the trembling air.
The fortress gleams in Spanish sunshine now
('Tis south a mile before the rays are Moorish)—
Hereditary jewel, agraffe bright
On all the many-titled privilege
Of young Duke Silva. No Castilian knight

That serves Queen Isabel has higher charge;
For near this frontier sits the Moorish king,
Not Boabdil the waverer, who usurps
A throne he trembles in, and fawning licks
The feet of conquerors, but that fierce lion
Grisly El Zagal, who has made his lair
In Guadix' fort, and rushing thence with strength,
Half his own fierceness, half the untainted heart
Of mountain bands that fight for holiday,
Wastes the fair lands that lie by Alcalá,
Wreathing his horse's neck with Christian heads.

To keep the Christian frontier—such high trust
Is young Duke Silva's; and the time is great.
(What times are little? To the sentinel
That hour is regal when he mounts on guard.)
The fifteenth century since the Man Divine
Taught and was hated in Capernaum
Is near its end—is falling as a husk
Away from all the fruit its years have riped.
The Moslem faith, now flickering like a torch
In a night struggle on this shore of Spain,
Glares a broad column of advancing flame,
Along the Danube and the Illyrian shore
Far into Italy, where eager monks,
Who watch in dreams and dream the while they watch,
See Christ grow paler in the baleful light,
Crying again the cry of the forsaken.
But faith, the stronger for extremity,
Becomes prophetic, hears the far-off tread
Of western chivalry, sees downward sweep
The archangel Michael with the gleaming sword,
And listens for the shriek of hurrying fiends
Chased from their revels in God's sanctuary.
So trusts the monk, and lifts appealing eyes
To the high dome, the Church's firmament,
Where the blue light-pierced curtain, rolled away,
Reveals the throne and Him who sits thereon.
So trust the men whose best hope for the world
Is ever that the world is near its end:
Impatient of the stars that keep their course
And make no pathway for the coming Judge.

But other futures stir the world's great heart.
The West now enters on the heritage

Won from the tombs of mighty ancestors,
The seeds, the gold, the gems, the silent harps
That lay deep buried with the memories
Of old renown.
No more, as once in sunny Avignon,
The poet-scholar spreads the Homeric page,
And gazes sadly, like the deaf at song;
For now the old epic voices ring again
And vibrate with the beat and melody
Stirred by the warmth of old Ionian days.
The martyred sage, the Attic orator,
Immortally incarnate, like the gods,
In spiritual bodies, wingèd words
Holding a universe impalpable,
Find a new audience. Forevermore,
With grander resurrection than was feigned
Of Attila's fierce Huns, the soul of Greece
Conquers the bulk of Persia. The maimed form
Of calmly-joyous beauty, marble-limbed,
Yet breathing with the thought that shaped its lips,
Looks mild reproach from out its opened grave
At creeds of terror; and the vine-wreathed god
Fronts the pierced Image with the crown of thorns.
The soul of man is widening toward the past:
No longer hanging at the breast of life
Feeding in blindness to his parentage—
Quenching all wonder with Omnipotence,
Praising a name with indolent piety—
He spells the record of his long descent,
More largely conscious of the life that was.
And from the height that shows where morning shone
On far-off summits pale and gloomy now,
The horizon widens round him, and the west
Looks vast with untracked waves whereon his gaze
Follows the flight of the swift-vanished bird
That like the sunken sun is mirrored still
Upon the yearning soul within the eye.
And so in Córdova through patient nights
Columbus watches, or he sails in dreams
Between the setting stars and finds new day;
Then wakes again to the old weary days,
Girds on the cord and frock of pale Saint Francis,
And like him zealous pleads with foolish men.
"I ask but for a million maravedis:
Give me three caravels to find a world,

New shores, new realms, new soldiers for the Cross.
Son cosas grandes!" Thus he pleads in vain;
Yet faints not utterly, but pleads anew,
Thinking, "God means it, and has chosen me."
For this man is the pulse of all mankind
Feeding an embryo future, offspring strange
Of the fond Present, that with mother-prayers
And mother-fancies looks for championship
Of all her loved beliefs and old-world ways
From that young Time she bears within her womb.
The sacred places shall be purged again,
The Turk converted, and the Holy Church,
Like the mild Virgin with the outspread robe,
Shall fold all tongues and nations lovingly.

But since God works by armies, who shall be
The modern Cyrus? Is it France most Christian,
Who with his lilies and brocaded knights,
French oaths, French vices, and the newest style
Of out-puffed sleeve, shall pass from west to east,
A winnowing fan to purify the seed
For fair millennial harvests soon to come?
Or is not Spain the land of chosen warriors?—
Crusaders consecrated from the womb,
Carrying the sword-cross stamped upon their souls
By the long yearnings of a nation's life,
Through all the seven patient centuries
Since first Pelayo and his resolute band
Trusted the God within their Gothic hearts
At Covadunga, and defied Mahound;
Beginning so the Holy War of Spain
That now is panting with the eagerness
Of labor near its end. The silver cross
Glitters o'er Malaga and streams dread light
On Moslem galleys, turning all their stores
From threats to gifts. What Spanish knight is he
Who, living now, holds it not shame to live
Apart from that hereditary battle
Which needs his sword? Castilian gentlemen
Choose not their task—they choose to do it well.

The time is great, and greater no man's trust
Than his who keeps the fortress for his king.
Wearing great honors as some delicate robe
Brocaded o'er with names 'twere sin to tarnish.

Born de la Cerda, Calatravan knight,
Count of Segura, fourth duke of Bedmár,
Offshoot from that high stock of old Castile
Whose topmost branch is proud Medina Celi—
Such titles with their blazonry are his
Who keeps this fortress, its sworn governor,
Lord of the valley, master of the town,
Commanding whom he will, himself commanded
By Christ his Lord who sees him from the Cross
And from bright heaven where the Mother pleads;—
By good Saint James upon the milk-white steed,
Who leaves his bliss to fight for chosen Spain;—
By the dead gaze of all his ancestors;—
And by the mystery of his Spanish blood
Charged with the awe and glories of the past.

See now with soldiers in his front and rear
He winds at evening through the narrow streets
That toward the Castle gate climb devious:
His charger, of fine Andalusian stock,
An Indian beauty, black but delicate,
Is conscious of the herald trumpet note,
The gathering glances, and familiar ways
That lead fast homeward: she forgets fatigue,
And at the light touch of the master's spur
Thrills with the zeal to bear him royally,
Arches her neck and clambers up the stones
As if disdainful of the difficult steep.
Night-black the charger, black the rider's plume,
But all between is bright with morning hues—
Seems ivory and gold and deep blue gems,
And starry flashing steel and pale vermilion,
All set in jasper: on his surcoat white
Glitter the sword-belt and the jeweled hilt,
Red on the back and breast the holy cross,
And 'twixt the helmet and the soft-spun white
Thick tawny wavelets like the lion's mane
Turn backward from his brow, pale, wide, erect,
Shadowing blue eyes — blue as the rain-washed sky
That braced the early stem of Gothic kings
He claims for ancestry. A goodly knight,
A noble caballero, broad of chest
And long of limb. So much the August sun,
Now in the west but shooting half its beams
Past a dark rocky profile toward the plain,

At windings of the path across the slope
Makes suddenly luminous for all who see:
For women smiling from the terraced roofs;
For boys that prone on trucks with head up-propped
Lazy and curious, stare irreverent;
For men who make obeisance with degrees
Of good-will shading toward servility,
Where good-will ends and secret fear begins
And curses, too, low-muttered through the teeth,
Explanatory to the God of Shem.

Five, grouped within a whitened tavern court
Of Moorish fashion, where the trellised vines
Purpling above their heads make odorous shade,
Note through the open door the passers-by,
Getting some rills of novelty to speed
The lagging stream of talk and help the wine.
'Tis Christian to drink wine: whoso denies
His flesh at bidding save of Holy Church,
Let him beware and take to Christian sins
Lest he be taxed with Moslem sanctity.

The souls are five, the talkers only three.
(No time, most tainted by wrong faith and rule,
But holds some listeners and dumb animals.)
MINE HOST is one: he with the well-arched nose,
Soft-eyed, fat-handed, loving men for naught
But his own humor, patting old and young
Upon the back, and mentioning the cost
With confidential blandness, as a tax
That he collected much against his will
From Spaniards who were all his bosom friends:
Warranted Christian — else how keep an inn,
Which calling asks true faith? though like his wine
Of cheaper sort, a trifle over-new.
His father was a convert, chose the chrism
As men choose physic, kept his chimney warm
With smokiest wood upon a Saturday,
Counted his gains and grudges on a chaplet,
And crossed himself asleep for fear of spies;
Trusting the God of Israel would see
'Twas Christian tyranny that made him base.
Our host his son was born ten years too soon,
Had heard his mother call him Ephraim.
Knew holy things from common, thought it sin

To feast on days when Israel's children mourned,
So had to be converted with his sire,
To doff the awe he learned as Ephraim,
And suit his manners to a Christian name.
But infant awe, that unborn moving thing,
Dies with what nourished it, can never rise
From the dead womb and walk and seek new pasture.
Thus baptism seemed to him a merry game
Not tried before, all sacraments a mode
Of doing homage for one's property,
And all religions a queer human whim
Or else a vice, according to degrees:
As, 'tis a whim to like your chestnuts hot,
Burn your own mouth and draw your face awry,
A vice to pelt frogs with them — animals
Content to take life coolly. And Lorenzo
Would have all lives made easy, even lives
Of spiders and inquisitors, yet still
Wishing so well to flies and Moors and Jews
He rather wished the others easy death;
For loving all men clearly was deferred
Till all men loved each other. Such Mine Host,
With chiseled smile caressing Seneca,
The solemn mastiff leaning on his knee.

His right-hand guest is solemn as the dog,
Square-faced and massive: BLASCO is his name,
A prosperous silversmith from Aragon;
In speech not silvery, rather tuned as notes
From a deep vessel made of plenteous iron,
Or some great bell of slow but certain swing
That, if you only wait, will tell the hour
As well as flippant clocks that strike in haste
And set off chiming a superfluous tune—
Like JUAN there, the spare man with the lute,
Who makes you dizzy with his rapid tongue,
Whirring athwart your mind with comment swift
On speech you would have finished by-and-by,
Shooting your bird for you while you were loading,
Cheapening your wisdom as a pattern known,
Woven by any shuttle on demand.
Can never sit quite still, too: sees a wasp
And kills it with a movement like a flash;
Whistles low notes or seems to thrum his lute
As a mere hyphen 'twixt two syllables

Of any steadier man; walks up and down
And snuffs the orange flowers and shoots a pea
To hit a streak of light let through the awning.
Has a queer face: eyes large as plums, a nose
Small, round, uneven, like a bit of wax
Melted and cooled by chance. Thin-fingered, lithe,
And as a squirrel noiseless, startling men
Only by quickness. In his speech and look
A touch of graceful wildness, as of things
Not trained or tamed for uses of the world;
Most like the Fauns that roamed in days of old
About the listening whispering woods, and shared
The subtler sense of sylvan ears and eyes
Undulled by scheming thought, yet joined the rout
Of men and women on the festal days,
And played the syrinx too, and knew love's pains,
Turning their anguish into melody.
For Juan was a minstrel still, in times
When minstrelsy was held a thing outworn.
Spirits seemed buried and their epitaph
Is writ in Latin by severest pens,
Yet still they flit above the trodden grave
And find new bodies, animating them
In quaint and ghostly way with antique souls.
So Juan was a troubadour revived,
Freshening life's dusty road with babbling rills
Of wit and song, living 'mid harnessed men
With limbs ungalled by armor, ready so
To soothe them weary, and to cheer them sad.
Guest at the board, companion in the camp,
A crystal mirror to the life around,
Flashing the comment keen of simple fact
Defined in words; lending brief lyric voice
To grief and sadness; hardly taking note
Of difference betwixt his own and others';
But rather singing as a listener
To the deep moans, the cries, the wild strong joys
Of universal Nature, old yet young.
Such Juan, the third talker, shimmering bright
As butterfly or bird with quickest life.
The silent ROLDAN has his brightness too,
But only in his spangles and rosettes.
His parti-colored vest and crimson hose
Are dulled with old Valencian dust, his eyes
With straining fifty years at gilded balls

To catch them dancing, or with brazen looks
At men and women as he made his jests
Some thousand times and watched to count the pence
His wife was gathering. His olive face
Has an old writing in it, characters
Stamped deep by grins that had no merriment,
The soul's rude mark proclaiming all its blank;
As on some faces that have long grown old
In lifting tapers up to forms obscene
On ancient walls and chuckling with false zest
To please my lord, who gives the larger fee
For that hard industry in apishness.
Roldan would gladly never laugh again;
Pensioned, he would be grave as any ox,
And having beans and crumbs and oil secured
Would borrow no man's jokes forevermore.
'Tis harder now because his wife is gone,
Who had quick feet, and danced to ravishment
Of every ring jeweled with Spanish eyes,
But died and left this boy, lame from his birth,
And sad and obstinate, though when he will
He sings God-taught such marrow-thrilling strains
As seem the very voice of dying Spring,
A flute-like wail that mourns the blossoms gone,
And sinks, and is not, like their fragrant breath,
With fine transition on the trembling air.
He sits as if imprisoned by some fear,
Motionless, with wide eyes that seem not made
For hungry glancing of a twelve-year'd boy
To mark the living thing that he could tease,
But for the gaze of some primeval sadness
Dark twin with light in the creative ray.
This little PABLO has his spangles too,
And large rosettes to hide his poor left foot
Rounded like any hoof (his mother thought
God willed it so to punish all her sins).

I said the souls were five—besides the dog.
But there was still a sixth, with wrinkled face,
Gravé and disgusted with all merriment
Not less than Roldan. It is ANNIBAL,
The experienced monkey who performs the tricks,
Jumps through the hoops, and carries round the hat.
Once full of sallies and impromptu feats,
Now cautious not to light on aught that's new,

Lest he be whipped to do it o'er again
From A to Z, and make the gentry laugh:
A misanthropic monkey, gray and grim,
Bearing a lot that has no remedy
For want of concert in the monkey tribe.

We see the company, above their heads
The braided matting, golden as ripe corn,
Stretched in a curving strip close by the grapes,
Elsewhere rolled back to greet the cooler sky;
A fountain near, vase-shapen and broad-lipped,
Where timorous birds alight with tiny feet,
And hesitate and bend wise listening ears,
And fly away again with undipped beak.
On the stone floor the juggler's heaped-up goods,
Carpet and hoops, viol and tambourine,
Where Annibal sits perched with brows severe,
A serious ape whom none take seriously,
Obliged in this fool's world to earn his nuts
By hard buffoonery. We see them all,
And hear their talk—the talk of Spanish men,
With Southern intonation, vowels turned
Caressingly between the consonants,
Persuasive, willing, with such intervals
As music borrows from the wooing birds,
That plead with subtly curving, sweet descent—
And yet can quarrel, as these Spaniards can.

JUAN (*near the doorway*).

You hear the trumpet? There's old Ramon's blast.
No bray but his can shake the air so well.
He takes his trumpeting as solemnly
As angel charged to wake the dead; thinks war
Was made for trumpeters, and their great art
Made solely for themselves who understand it.
His features all have shaped themselves to blowing,
And when his trumpet's bagged or left at home
He seems a chattel in a broker's booth,
A spoutless watering-can, a promise to pay
No sum particular. O fine old Ramon!
The blasts get louder and the clattering hoofs;
They crack the ear as well as heaven's thunder
For owls that listen blinking. There's the banner.

HOST (*joining him: the others follow to the door*).

The Duke has finished reconnoitering, then?
We shall hear news. They say he means a sally—
Would strike El Zagal's Moors as they push home
Like ants with booty heavier than themselves;
Then, joined by other nobles with their bands,
Lay siege to Guadix. Juan, you're a bird
That nest within the castle. What say you?

JUAN.

Naught, I say naught. 'Tis but a toilsome game
To bet upon that feather Policy,
And guess where after twice a hundred puffs
'Twill catch another feather crossing it:
Guess how the Pope will blow and how the king;
What force my lady's fan has; how a cough
Seizing the Padre's throat may raise a gust,
And how the queen may sigh the feather down.
Such catching at imaginary threads,
Such spinning twisted air, is not for me.
If I should want a game, I'll rather bet
On racing snails, two large, slow, lingering snails—
No spurring, equal weights—a chance sublime,
Nothing to guess at, pure uncertainty.
Here comes the Duke. They give but feeble shouts.
And some look sour.

HOST.

That spoils a fair occasion.
Civility brings no conclusions with it,
And cheerful *Vivas* make the moments glide
Instead of grating like a rusty wheel.

JUAN.

O they are dullards, kick because they're stung,
And bruise a friend to show they hate a wasp.

HOST.

Best treat your wasp with delicate regard;
When the right moment comes say, "By your leave."
Use your heel—so! and make an end of him.
That's if we talked of wasps; but our young Duke—
Spain holds not a more gallant gentleman.

Live, live, Duke Silva! 'Tis a rare smile he has,
But seldom seen.

JUAN.

A true hidalgo's smile,
That gives much favor, but beseeches none.
His smile is sweetened by his gravity:
It comes like dawn upon Sierra snows,
Seeming more generous for the coldness gone;
Breaks from the calm—a sudden opening flower
On dark deep waters: now a chalice shut,
A mystic shrine, the next a full-rayed star,
Thrilling, pulse-quickening as a living word.
I'll make a song of that.

HOST.

Prithee, not now.
You'll fall to staring like a wooden saint,
And wag your head as it were set on wires.
Here's fresh sherbét. Sit, be good company.
(*To* BLASCO) You are a stranger, sir, and cannot know
How our Duke's nature suits his princely frame.

BLASCO.

Nay, but I marked his spurs—chased cunningly!
A duke should know good gold and silver plate;
Then he will know the quality of mine.
I've ware for tables and for altars too,
Our Lady in all sizes, crosses, bells:
He'll need such weapons full as much as swords
If he would capture any Moorish town.
For, let me tell you, when a mosque is cleansed ——

JUAN.

The demons fly so thick from sound of bells
And smell of incense, you may see the air
Streaked with them as with smoke. Why, they are spirits:
You may well think how crowded they must be
To make a sort of haze.

BLASCO.

I knew not that.
Still, they're of smoky nature, demons are;

And since you say so—well, it proves the more
The need of bells and censers. Ay, your Duke
Sat well: a true hidalgo. I can judge—
Of harness specially. I saw the camp,
The royal camp at Velez Malaga.
'Twas like the court of heaven—such liveries!
And torches carried by the score at night
Before the nobles. Sirs, I made a dish
To set an emerald in would fit a crown,
For Don Alonzo, lord of Aguilar.
Your Duke's no whit behind him in his mien
Or harness either. But you seem to say
The people love him not.

HOST.

They've naught against him.
But certain winds will make men's temper bad.
When the Solano blows hot venomed breath,
It acts upon men's knives: steel takes to stabbing
Which else, with cooler winds, were honest steel,
Cutting but garlick. There's a wind just now
Blows right from Seville ——

BLASCO.

Ay, you mean the wind ——
Yes, yes, a wind that's rather hot ——

HOST.

With faggots.

JUAN.

A wind that suits not with our townsmen's blood.
Abram, 'tis said, objected to be scorched,
And, as the learned Arabs vouch, he gave
The antipathy in full to Ishmaël.
'Tis true, these patriarchs had their oddities.

BLASCO.

Their oddities? I'm of their mind, I know.
Though, as to Abraham and Ishmaël,
I'm an old Christian, and owe naught to them
Or any Jew among them. But I know
We made a stir in Saragossa—we:

The men of Aragon ring hard—true metal.
Sirs, I'm no friend to heresy, but then
A Christian's money is not safe. As how?
A lapsing Jew or any heretic
May owe me twenty ounces: suddenly
He's prisoned, suffers penalties—'tis well:
If men will not believe, 'tis good to make them,
But let the penalties fall on them alone.
The Jew is stripped, his goods are confiscate;
Now, where, I pray you, go my twenty ounces?
God knows, and perhaps the King may, but not I.
And more, my son may lose his young wife's dower
Because 'twas promised since her father's soul
Fell to wrong thinking. How was I to know?
I could but use my sense and cross myself.
Christian is Christian—I give in—but still
Taxing is taxing, though you call it holy.
We Saragossans liked not this new tax
They call the—nonsense, I'm from Aragon!
I speak too bluntly. But, for Holy Church,
No man believes more.

HOST.

Nay, sir, never fear.
Good Master Roldan here is no delator.

ROLDAN. (*starting from a reverie*).

You speak to me, sirs? I perform to-night—
The Plaça Santiago. Twenty tricks,
All different. I dance, too. And the boy
Sings like a bird. I crave your patronage.

BLASCO.

Faith, you shall have it, sir. In traveling
I take a little freedom, and am gay.
You marked not what I said just now?

ROLDAN.

I? no.
I pray your pardon. I've a twinging knee,
That makes it hard to listen. You were saying?

BLASCO.

Nay, it was naught. (*Aside to* HOST) Is it his deepness?

HOST.

No.
He's deep in nothing but his poverty.

BLASCO.

But 'twas his poverty that made me think——

HOST.

His piety might wish to keep the feasts
As well as fasts. No fear; he hears not.

BLASCO.

Good.
I speak my mind about the penalties,
But look you, I'm against assassination.
You know my meaning—Master Arbués,
The grand Inquisitor in Aragon.
I knew naught—paid no copper toward the deed.
But I was there, at prayers, within the church.
How could I help it? Why, the saints were there,
And looked straight on above the altars. I——

JUAN.

Looked carefully another way.

BLASCO.

Why, at my beads.
'Twas after midnight, and the canons all
Were chanting matins. I was not in church
To gape and stare. I saw the martyr kneel;
I never liked the look of him alive—
He was no martyr then. I thought he made
An ugly shadow as he crept athwart
The bands of light, then passed within the gloom
By the broad pillar. 'Twas in our great Seo,
At Saragossa. The pillars tower so large
You cross yourself to see them, lest white Death
Should hide behind their dark. And so it was.
I looked away again and told my beads
Unthinkingly; but still a man has ears;
And right across the chanting came a sound
As if a tree had crashed above the roar

Of some great torrent. So it seemed to me;
For when you listen long and shut your eyes
Small sounds get thunderous. He had a shell
Like any lobster; a good iron suit
From top to toe beneath the innocent serge.
That made the tell-tale sound. But then came shrieks.
The chanting stopped and turned to rushing feet,
And in the midst lay Master Arbués,
Felled like an ox. 'Twas wicked butchery.
Some honest men had hoped it would have scared
The Inquisition out of Aragon.
'Twas money thrown away—I would say, crime—
Clean thrown away.

HOST.

That was a pity now
Next to a missing thrust, what irks me most
Is a neat well-aimed stroke that kills your man,
Yet ends in mischief—as in Aragon.
It was a lesson to our people here.
Else there's a monk within our city walls,
A holy, high-born, stern Dominican,
They might have made the great mistake to kill.

BLASCO.

What! is he?——

HOST.

Yes; a Master Arbués
Of finer quality. The Prior here
And uncle to our Duke.

BLASCO.

He will want plate;
A holy pillar or a crucifix.
But, did you say, he was like Arbués?

JUAN.

As a black eagle with gold beak and claws
Is like a raven. Even in his cowl,
Covered from head to foot, the Prior is known
From all the black herd round. When he uncovers
And stands white-frocked, with ivory face, his eyes
Black-gleaming, black his coronal of hair

Like shredded jasper, he seems less a man
With struggling aims, than pure incarnate Will,
Fit to subdue rebellious nations, nay,
That human flesh he breathes in, charged with passion
Which quivers in his nostril and his lip,
But disciplined by long in-dwelling will
To silent labor in the yoke of law.
A truce to thy comparisons, Lorenzo!
Thine is no subtle nose for difference;
'Tis dulled by feigning and civility.

HOST.

Pooh, thou'rt a poet, crazed with finding words
May stick to things and seem like qualities.
No pebble is a pebble in thy hands:
'Tis a moon out of work, a barren egg,
Or twenty things that no man sees but thee.
Our Father Isidor's—a living saint,
And that is heresy, some townsmen think:
Saints should be dead, according to the Church.
My mind is this: the Father is so holy
'Twere sin to wish his soul detained from bliss.
Easy translation to the realms above,
The shortest journey to the seventh heaven,
Is what I'd never grudge him.

BLASCO.

Piously said.
Look you, I'm dutiful, obey the Church
When there's no help for it: I mean to say,
When Pope and Bishop and all customers
Order alike. But there be bishops now,
And were aforetime, who have held it wrong,
This hurry to convert the Jews. As how?
Your Jew pays tribute to the bishop, say.
That's good, and must please God, to see the Church
Maintained in ways that ease the Christian's purse.
Convert the Jew, and where's the tribute, pray?
He lapses, too: 'tis slippery work, conversion:
And then the holy taxing carries off
His money at one sweep. No tribute more!
He's penitent or burned, and there's an end.
Now guess which pleases God——

JUAN.

Whether he likes
A well-burned Jew or well-fed bishop best.

[While Juan put this problem theologic
Entered, with resonant step, another guest—
A soldier: all his keenness in his sword,
His eloquence in scars upon his cheek,
His virtue in much slaying of the Moor:
With brow well-creased in horizontal folds
To save the space, as having naught to do:
Lips prone to whistle whisperingly—no tune,
But trotting rhythm: meditative eyes,
Most often fixed upon his legs and spurs:
Styled Captain Lopez.]

LOPEZ.

At your service, sirs.

JUAN.

Ha, Lopez? Why, thou hast a face full-charged
As any herald's. What news of the wars?

LOPEZ.

Such news as is most bitter on my tongue.

JUAN.

Then spit it forth.

HOST.

Sit, Captain: here's a cup,
Fresh-filled. What news?

LOPEZ.

'Tis bad. We make no sally:
We sit still here and wait whate'er the Moor
Shall please to do.

HOST.

Some townsmen will be glad.

LOPEZ.

Glad, will they be? But I'm not glad, not I,
Nor any Spanish soldier of clean blood.
But the Duke's wisdom is to wait a siege
Instead of laying one. Therefore—meantime—
He will be married straightway.

HOST.

Ha, ha, ha!
Thy speech is like an hourglass; turn it down
The other way, 'twill stand as well, and say
The Duke will wed, therefore he waits a siege.
But what says Don Diego and the Prior?
The holy uncle and the fiery Don?

LOPEZ.

O there be sayings running all abroad
As thick as nuts o'erturned. No man need lack.
Some say, 'twas letters changed the Duke's intent:
From Malaga, says Blas. From Rome, says Quintin.
From spies at Guadix, says Sebastian.
Some say 'tis all a pretext—say, the Duke
Is but a lapdog hanging on a skirt,
Turning his eyeballs upward like a monk:
'Twas Don Diego said that—so says Blas;
Last week, he said——

JUAN.

O do without the "said!"
Open thy mouth and pause in lieu of it.
I had as lief be pelted with a pea
Irregularly in the self-same spot
As hear such iteration without rule,
Such torture of uncertain certainty.

LOPEZ.

Santiago! Juan, thou art hard to please.
I speak not for my own delighting, I.
I can be silent, I.

BLASCO.

Nay, sir, speak on!

I like your matter well. I deal in plate.
This wedding touches me. Who is the bride?

LOPEZ.

One that some say the Duke does ill to wed.
One that his mother reared—God rest her soul!—
Duchess Diana—she who died last year.
A bird picked up away from any nest.
Her name—the Duchess gave it—is Fedalma.
No harm in that. But the Duke stoops, they say,
In wedding her. And that's the simple truth.

JUAN.

Thy simple truth is but a false opinion:
The simple truth of asses who believe
Their thistle is the very best of food.
Fie, Lopez, thou a Spaniard with a sword
Dreamest a Spanish noble ever stoops
By doing honor to the maid he loves!
He stoops alone when he dishonors her.

LOPEZ.

Nay, I said naught against her.

JUAN.

Better not.
Else I would challenge thee to fight with wits,
And spear thee through and through ere thou couldst draw
The bluntest word. Yes, yes, consult thy spurs:
Spurs are a sign of knighthood, and should tell thee
That knightly love is blent with reverence
As heavenly air is blent with heavenly blue.
Don Silva's heart beats to a loyal tune:
He wills no highest-born Castilian dame,
Betrothed to highest noble, should be held
More sacred than Fedalma. He enshrines
Her virgin image for the general awe
And for his own—will guard her from the world,
Nay, his profaner self, lest he should lose
The place of his religion. He does well.
Naught can come closer to the poet's strain.

HOST.

Or farther from his practice, Juan, eh?
If thou'rt a sample?

JUAN.

Wrong there, my Lorenzo!
Touching Fedalma the poor poet plays
A finer part even than the noble Duke.

LOPEZ.

By making ditties, singing with round mouth
Likest a crowing cock? Thou meanest that?

JUAN.

Lopez, take physic, thou art getting ill,
Growing descriptive; 'tis unnatural.
I mean, Don Silva's love expects reward,
Kneels with a heaven to come; but the poor poet
Worships without reward, nor hopes to find
A heaven save in his worship. He adores
The sweetest woman for her sweetness' sake,
Joys in the love that was not born for him,
Because 'tis lovingness, as beggars joy,
Warming their naked limbs on wayside walls,
To hear a tale of princes and their glory.
There's a poor poet (poor, I mean, in coin)
Worships Fedalma with so true a love
That if her silken robe were changed for rags,
And she were driven out to stony wilds
Barefoot, a scornéd wanderer, he would kiss
Her ragged garment's edge, and only ask
For leave to be her slave. Digest that, friend,
Or let it lie upon thee as a weight
To check light thinking of Fedalma.

LOPEZ.

I?
I think no harm of her; I thank the saints
I wear a sword and peddle not in thinking.
'Tis Father Marcos says she'll not confess
And loves not holy water; says her blood
Is infidel; says the Duke's wedding her
Is union of light with darkness.

JUAN.

Tush!

[Now Juan—who by snatches touched his lute
With soft arpeggio, like a whispered dream
Of sleeping music, while he spoke of love—
In jesting anger at the soldier's talk
Thrummed loud and fast, then faster and more loud,
Till, as he answered "Tush!" he struck a chord
Sudden as whip-crack close by Lopez' ear.
Mine host and Blasco smiled, the mastiff barked,
Roldan looked up and Annibal looked down,
Cautiously neutral in so new a case:
The boy raised longing, listening eyes that seemed
An exiled spirit's waiting in strained hope
Of voices coming from the distant land.
But Lopez bore the assault like any rock:
That was not what he drew his sword at—he!
He spoke with neck erect.]

LOPEZ.

If that's a hint
The company should ask thee for a song,
Sing, then!

HOST.

Ay, Juan, sing, and jar no more.
Something brand new. Thou'rt wont to make my ear
A test of novelties. Hast thou aught fresh?

JUAN.

As fresh as rain-drops. Here's a Cancion
Springs like a tiny mushroom delicate
Out of the priest's foul scandal of Fedalma.

[He preluded with querying intervals,
Rising, then falling just a semitone,
In minor cadence—sound with poisèd wing
Hovering and quivering toward the needed fall.
Then in a voice that shook the willing air
With masculine vibration sang this song:

Should I long that dark were fair?
Say, O Song!
Lacks my love aught, that I should long?

Dark the night, with breath all flow'rs,
And tender broken voice that fills
With ravishment the listening hours:
Whisperings, wooings,
Liquid ripples and soft ring-dove cooings
In low-toned rhythm that love's aching stills.
Dark the night,
Yet is she bright,
For in her dark she brings the mystic star,
Trembling yet strong, as is the voice of love,
From some unknown afar.
O radiant dark! O darkly-fostered ray!
Thou hast a joy too deep for shallow Day.

While Juan sang, all round the tavern court
Gathered a constellation of black eyes.
Fat Lola leaned upon the balcony
With arms that might have pillowed Hercules
(Who built, 'tis known, the mightiest Spanish towns);
Thin Alda's face, sad as a wasted passion,
Leaned o'er the nodding baby's; 'twixt the rails
The little Pepe showed his two black beads,
His flat-ringed hair and small Semitic nose,
Complete and tiny as a new-born minnow;
Patting his head and holding in her arms
The baby senior, stood Lorenzo's wife
All negligent, her kerchief discomposed
By little clutches, woman's coquetry
Quite turned to mother's cares and sweet content.
These on the balcony, while at the door
Gazed the lank boys and lazy-shouldered men.
'Tis likely too the rats and insects peeped,
Being Southern Spanish ready for a lounge.
The singer smiled, as doubtless Orpheus smiled,
To see the animals both great and small,
The mountainous elephant and scampering mouse,
Held by the ears in decent audience;
Then, when mine host desired the strain once more,
He fell to preluding with rhythmic change
Of notes recurrent, soft as pattering drops
That fall from off the eaves in fairy dance

When clouds are breaking; till at measured pause
He struck with strength, in rare responsive chords.]

HOST.

Come, then, a gayer ballad, if thou wilt:
I quarrel not with change. What say you, Captain?

LOPEZ.

All's one to me. I note no change of tune,
Not I, save in the ring of horses' hoofs,
Or in the drums and trumpets when they call
To action or retreat. I ne'er could see
The good of singing.

BLASCO.

Why, it passes time—
Saves you from getting over-wise: that's good.
For, look you, fools are merry here below,
Yet they will go to heaven all the same,
Having the sacraments; and, look you, heaven
Is a long holiday, and solid men,
Used to much business, might be ill at ease
Not liking play. And so, in traveling,
I shape myself betimes to idleness
And take fools' pleasures ——

HOST.

Hark, the song begins!

JUAN (*sings*).

Maiden, crowned with glossy blackness,
Lithe as panther forest-roaming,
Long-armed naiad, when she dances,
On a stream of ether floating—
Bright, O bright Fedalma!

Form all curves like softness drifted,
Wave-kissed marble roundly dimpling,
Far-off music slowly winged,
Gently rising, gently sinking—
Bright, O bright Fedalma!

Pure as rain-tear on a rose-leaf,
Cloud high-born in noonday spotless,

Sudden perfect as the dew-bead,
Gem of earth and sky begotten—
Bright, O bright Fedalma!

Beauty has no mortal father,
Holy light her form engendered
Out of tremor, yearning, gladness,
Presage sweet and joy remembered—
Child of Light, Fedalma!

BLASCO.

Faith, a good song, sung to a stirring tune.
I like the words returning in a round;
It gives a sort of sense. Another such!

ROLDAN (*rising*).

Sirs, you will hear my boy. 'Tis very hard
When gentles sing for naught to all the town.
How can a poor man live? And now 'tis time
I go to the Plaça—who will give me pence
When he can hear hidalgos and give naught?

JUAN.

True, friend. Be pacified. I'll sing no more.
Go thou, and we will follow. Never fear.
My voice is common as the ivy-leaves,
Plucked in all seasons—bears no price; thy boy's
Is like the almond blossoms. Ah, he's lame!

HOST.

Load him not heavily. Here, Pedro! help.
Go with them to the Plaça, take the hoops.
The sights will pay thee.

BLASCO.

I'll be there anon,
And set the fashion with a good white coin.
But let us see as well as hear.

HOST.

Ay, prithee.
Some tricks, a dance.

BLASCO.

Yes, 'tis more rational.

ROLDAN (*turning round with the bundle and monkey on his shoulders*).

You shall see all, sirs. There's no man in Spain
Knows his art better. I've a twinging knee
Oft hinders dancing, and the boy is lame.
But no man's monkey has more tricks than mine.

[At this high praise the gloomy Annibal,
Mournful professor of high drollery,
Seemed to look gloomier, and the little troop
Went slowly out, escorted from the door
By all the idlers. From the balcony
Slowly subsided the black radiance
Of agate eyes, and broke in chattering sounds,
Coaxings and trampings, and the small hoarse squeak
Of Pepe's reed. And our group talked again.]

HOST.

I'll get this juggler, if he quits him well,
An audience here as choice as can be lured.
For me, when a poor devil does his best,
'Tis my delight to soothe his soul with praise.
What though the best be bad? remains the good
Of throwing food to a lean hungry dog.
I'd give up the best jugglery in life
To see a miserable juggler pleased.
But that's my humor. Crowds are malcontent
And cruel as the Holy——shall we go?
All of us now together?

LOPEZ.

Well, not I.
I may be there anon, but first I go
To the lower prison. There is strict command
That all our gypsy prisoners shall to-night
Be lodged within the fort. They've forged enough
Of balls and bullets—used up all the metal.
At morn to-morrow they must carry stones
Up the south tower. 'Tis a fine stalwart band,
Fit for the hardest tasks. Some say, the queen

Would have the gypsies banished with the Jews.
Some say, 'twere better harness them for work.
They'd feed on any filth and save the Spaniard.
Some say—but I must go. 'Twill soon be time
To head the escort. We shall meet again.

BLASCO.

Go, sir, with God (*exit Lopez*). A very proper man,
And soldierly. But, for this banishment
Some men are hot on, it ill pleases me.
The Jews, now (sirs, if any Christian here
Had Jews for ancestors, I blame him not;
We cannot all be Goths of Aragon)—
Jews are not fit for heaven, but on earth
They are most useful. 'Tis the same with mules,
Horses, or oxen, or with any pig
Except St. Anthony's. They are useful here
(The Jews, I mean) though they may go to hell.
And, look you, useful sins—why Providence
Sends Jews to do 'em, saving Christian souls.
The very Gypsies, curbed and harnessed well,
Would make draft cattle, feed on vermin too,
Cost less than grazing brutes, and turn bad food
To handsome carcasses; sweat at the forge
For little wages, and well drilled and flogged
Might work like slaves, some Spaniards looking on.
I deal in plate, and am no priest to say
What God may mean, save when he means plain sense;
But when he sent the Gypsies wandering
In punishment because they sheltered not
Our Lady and St. Joseph (and no doubt
Stole the small ass they fled with into Egypt),
Why send them here? 'Tis plain he saw the use
They'd be to Spaniards. Shall we banish them,
And tell God we know better? 'Tis a sin.
They talk of vermin; but, sirs; vermin large
Were made to eat the small, or else to eat
The noxious rubbish, and picked Gypsy men
Might serve in war to climb, be killed, and fall
To make an easy ladder. Once I saw
A Gypsy sorcerer, at a spring and grasp
Kill one who came to seize him: talk of strength!
Nay, swiftness too, for while we crossed ourselves
He vanished like—say, like——

JUAN.

A swift black snake,
Or like a living arrow fledged with will.

BLASCO.

Why, did you see him, pray?

JUAN.

Not then, but now,
As painters see the many in the one.
We have a Gypsy in Bedmár whose frame
Nature compacted with such fine selection,
'Twould yield a dozen types: all Spanish knights,
From him who slew Rolando at the pass
Up to the mighty Cid; all deities,
Thronging Olympus in fine attitudes;
Or all hell's heroes whom the poet saw
Tremble like lions, writhe like demigods.

HOST.

Pause not yet, Juan—more hyperbole!
Shoot upward still and flare in meteors
Before thou sink to earth in dull brown fact.

BLASCO.

Nay, give me fact, high shooting suits not me.
I never stare to look for soaring larks.
What is this Gypsy?

HOST.

Chieftain of a band,
The Moor's allies, whom full a month ago
Our Duke surprised and brought us captives home.
He needed smiths, and doubtless the brave Moor
Has missed some useful scouts and archers too.
Juan's fantastic pleasure is to watch
These Gypsies forging, and to hold discourse
With this great chief, whom he transforms at will
To sage or warrior, and like the sun
Plays daily at fallacious alchemy,
Turns sand to gold and dewy spider-webs
To myriad rainbows. Still the sand is sand,

And still in sober shade you see the web.
'Tis so, I'll wager, with this Gypsy chief—
A piece of stalwart cunning, nothing more.

JUAN.

No! My invention had been all too poor
To frame this Zarca as I saw him first.
'Twas when they stripped him. In his chieftain's gear,
Amidst his men he seemed a royal barb
Followed by wild-maned Andalusian colts,
He had a necklace of a strange device
In finest gold of unknown workmanship,
But delicate as Moorish, fit to kiss
Fedalma's neck, and play in shadows there.
He wore fine mail, a rich-wrought sword and belt,
And on his surcoat black a broidered torch,
A pine-branch flaming, grasped by two dark hands.
But when they stripped him of his ornaments
It was the baubles lost their grace, not he.
His eyes, his mouth, his nostril, all inspired
With scorn that mastered utterance of scorn,
With power to check all rage until it turned
To ordered force, unleashed on chosen prey—
It seemed the soul within him made his limbs
And made them grand. The baubles were well gone.
He stood the more a king, when bared to man.

BLASCO.

Maybe. But nakedness is bad for trade,
And is not decent. Well-wrought metal, sir,
Is not a bauble. Had you seen the camp,
The royal camp at Velez Malaga,
Ponce de Leon and the other dukes,
The king himself and all his thousand knights
For body-guard, 'twould not have left you breath
To praise a Gypsy thus. A man's a man;
But when you see a king, you see the work
Of many thousand men. King Ferdinand
Bears a fine presence, and hath proper limbs;
But what though he were shrunken as a relic?
You'd see the gold and gems that cased him o'er,
And all the pages round him in brocade,
And all the lords, themselves a sort of kings,
Doing him reverence. That strikes an awe

Into a common man—especially
A judge of plate.

HOST.

Faith, very wisely said.
Purge thy speech, Juan. It is over-full
Of this same Gypsy. Praise the Catholic King.
And come now, let us see the juggler's skill.

The Plaça Santiago.

'Tis daylight still, but now the golden cross
Uplifted by the angel on the dome
Stands rayless in calm color clear-defined
Against the northern blue; from turrets high
The flitting splendor sinks with folded wing
Dark-hid till morning, and the battlements
Wear soft relenting whiteness mellowed o'er
By summers generous and winters bland.
Now in the east the distance casts its veil
And gazes with a deepening earnestness.
The old rain-fretted mountains in their robes
Of shadow-broken gray; the rounded hills
Reddened with blood of Titans, whose huge limbs,
Entombed within, feed full the hardy flesh
Of cactus green and blue broad-sworded aloes;
The cypress soaring black above the lines
Of white court-walls; the jointed sugar-canes
Pale-golden with their feathers motionless
In the warm quiet:—all thought-teaching form
Utters itself in firm unshimmering hues.
For the great rock has screened the westering sun
That still on plains beyond streams vaporous gold
Among the branches; and within Bedmár
Has come the time of sweet serenity
When color glows unglittering, and the soul
Of visible things shows silent happiness,
As that of lovers trusting though apart.
The ripe-cheeked fruits, the crimson-petaled flowers;
The winged life that pausing seems a gem
Cunningly carven on the dark green leaf;
The face of man with hues supremely blent
To difference fine as of a voice 'mid sounds:—
Each lovely light-dipped thing seems to emerge
Flushed gravely from baptismal sacrament.

All beauteous existence rests, yet wakes,
Lies still, yet conscious, with clear open eyes
And gentle breath and mild suffusèd joy.
'Tis day, but day that falls like melody
Repeated on a string with graver tones—
Tones such as linger in a long farewell.

The Plaça widens in the passive air—
The Plaça Santiago, where the church,
A mosque converted, shows an eyeless face
Red-checkered, faded, doing penance still—
Bearing with Moorish arch the imaged saint,
Apostle, baron, Spanish warrior,
Whose charger's hoofs trample the turbaned dead,
Whose banner with the Cross, the bloody sword
Flashes athwart the Moslem's glazing eye,
And mocks his trust in Allah who forsakes.
Up to the church the Plaça gently slopes,
In shape most like the pious palmer's shell,
Girdled with low white houses; high above
Tower the strong fortress and sharp-angled wall
And well-flanked castle gate. From o'er the roofs,
And from the shadowed pátios cool, there spreads
The breath of flowers and aromatic leaves
Soothing the sense with bliss indefinite—
A baseless hope, a glad presentiment,
That curves the lip more softly, fills the eye
With more indulgent beam. And so it soothes,
So gently sways the pulses of the crowd
Who make a zone about the central spot
Chosen by Roldan for his theatre.
Maids with arched eyebrows, delicate-penciled, dark,
Fold their round arms below the kerchief full;
Men shoulder little girls; and grandames gray,
But muscular still, hold babies on their arms;
While mothers keep the stout-legged boys in front
Against their skirts, as old Greek pictures show
The Glorious Mother with the Boy divine.
Youths keep the places for themselves, and roll
Large lazy eyes, and call recumbent dogs
(For reasons deep below the reach of thought).
The old men cough with purpose, wish to hint
Wisdom within that cheapens jugglery,
Maintain a neutral air, and knit their brows
In observation. None are quarrelsome,

Noisy, or very merry; for their blood
Moves slowly into fervor—they rejoice
Like those dark birds that sweep with heavy wing,
Cheering their mates with melancholy cries.

But now the gilded balls begin to play
In rhythmic numbers, ruled by practice fine
Of eye and muscle; all the juggler's form
Consents harmonious in swift-gliding change,
Easily forward stretched or backward bent
With lightest step and movement circular
Round a fixed point; 'tis not the old Roldan now,
The dull, hard, weary, miserable man,
The soul all parched to languid appetite
And memory of desire; 'tis wondrous force
That moves in combination multiform
Toward conscious ends: 'tis Roldan glorious,
Holding all eyes like any meteor,
King of the moment save when Annibal
Divides the scene and plays the comic part,
Gazing with blinking glances up and down
Dancing and throwing naught and catching it,
With mimicry as merry as the tasks
Of penance-working shades in Tartarus.

Pablo stands passive, and a space apart,
Holding a viol, waiting for command.
Music must not be wasted, but must rise
As needed climax; and the audience
Is growing with late comers. Juan now,
And the familiar host, with Blasco broad,
Find way made gladly to the inmost round
Studded with heads. Lorenzo knits the crowd
Into one family by showing all
Good-will and recognition. Juan casts
His large and rapid-measuring glance around;
But—with faint quivering, transient as a breath
Shaking a flame—his eyes make sudden pause
Where by the jutting angle of a street
Castle-ward leading, stands a female form,
A kerchief pale square-drooping o'er the brow,
About her shoulders dim brown serge—in garb
Most like a peasant woman from the vale,
Who might have lingered after marketing
To see the show. What thrill mysterious,

Ray-borne from orb to orb of conscious eyes,
The swift observing sweep of Juan's glance
Arrests an instant, then with prompting fresh
Diverts it lastingly? He turns at once
To watch the gilded balls, and nod and smile
At little round Pepíta, blondest maid
In all Bedmár—Pepíta, fair yet flecked,
Saucy of lip and nose, of hair as red
As breasts of robins stepping on the snow—
Who stands in front with little tapping feet,
And baby-dimpled hands that hide enclosed
Those sleeping crickets, the dark castanets.
But soon the gilded balls have ceased to play
And Annibal is leaping through the hoops,
That turn to twelve, meeting him as he flies
In the swift circle. Shuddering he leaps,
But with each spring flies swift and swifter still
To loud and louder shouts, while the great hoops
Are changed to smaller. Now the crowd is fired.
The motion swift, the living victim urged,
The imminent failure and repeated scape
Hurry all pulses and intoxicate
With subtle wine of passion many-mixed.
'Tis all about a monkey leaping hard
Till near to gasping; but it serves as well
As the great circus or arena dire,
Where these are lacking. Roldan cautiously
Slackens the leaps and lays the hoops to rest,
And Annibal retires with reeling brain
And backward stagger—pity, he could not smile!

Now Roldan spreads his carpet, now he shows
Strange metamorphoses: the pebble black
Changes to whitest egg within his hand;
A staring rabbit, with retreating ears,
Is swallowed by the air and vanishes;
He tells men's thoughts about the shaken dice,
Their secret choosings; makes the white beans pass
With causeless act sublime from cup to cup
Turned empty on the ground—diablerie
That pales the girls and puzzles all the boys:
These tricks are samples, hinting to the town
Roldan's great mastery. He tumbles next,
And Annibal is called to mock each feat
With arduous comicality and save

By rule romantic the great public mind
(And Roldan's body) from too serious strain.

But with the tumbling, lest the feats should fail
And so need veiling in a haze of sound,
Pablo awakes the viol and the bow—
The masculine bow that draws the woman's heart
From out the strings, and makes them cry, yearn, plead,
Tremble, exult, with mystic union
Of joy acute and tender suffering.
To play the viol and discreetly mix
Alternate with the bow's keen biting tones
The throb responsive to the finger's touch,
Was rarest skill that Pablo half had caught
From an old blind and wandering Catalan;
The other half was rather heritage
From treasure stored by generations past
In winding chambers of receptive sense.

The wingèd sounds exalt the thick-pressed crowd
With a new pulse in common, blending all
The gazing life into one larger soul
With dimly widened consciousness: as waves
In heightened movement tell of waves far off.
And the light changes; westward stationed clouds,
The sun's ranged outposts, luminous message spread,
Rousing quiescent things to doff their shade
And show themselves as added audience.
Now Pablo, letting fall the eager bow,
Solicits softer murmurs from the strings,
And now above them pours a wondrous voice
(Such as Greek reapers heard in Sicily)
With wounding rapture in it, like love's arrows;
And clear upon clear air as colored gems
Dropped in a crystal cup of water pure,
Fall words of sadness, simple, lyrical:

Spring comes hither,
Buds the rose;
Roses wither,
Sweet spring goes.
Ojala, would she carry me!

Summer soars—
Wide-winged day

White light pours,
Flies away.
Ojala, would he carry me!

Soft winds blow,
Westward born,
Onward go
Toward the morn.
Ojala, would they carry me!

Sweet birds sing
O'er the graves,
Then take wing
O'er the waves.
Ojala, would they carry me!

When the voice paused and left the viol's note
To plead forsaken, 'twas as when a cloud
Hiding the sun, makes all the leaves and flowers
Shiver. But when with measured change the strings
Had taught regret new longing, clear again,
Welcome as hope recovered, flowed the voice.

Warm whispering through the slender olive leaves
Came to me a gentle sound,
Whispering of a secret found
In the clear sunshine 'mid the golden sheaves:
Said it was sleeping for me in the morn,
Called it gladness, called it joy,
Drew me on—"Come hither, boy"—
To where the blue wings rested on the corn.
I thought the gentle sound had whispered true—
Thought the little heaven mine,
Leaned to clutch the thing divine,
And saw the blue wings melt within the blue.

The long notes linger on the trembling air,
With subtle penetration enter all
The myriad corridors of the passionate soul,
Message-like spread, and answering action rouse.
Not angular jigs that warm the chilly limbs
In hoary northern mists, but action curved
To soft andante strains pitched plaintively.
Vibrations sympathetic stir all limbs:
Old men live backward in their dancing prime,

And move in memory; small legs and arms
With pleasant agitation purposeless
Go up and down like pretty fruits in gales.
All long in common for the expressive act
Yet wait for it; as in the olden time
Men waited for the bard to tell their thought.
"The dance! the dance!" is shouted all around.
Now Pablo lifts the bow. Pepíta now,
Ready as bird that sees the sprinkled corn,
When Juan nods and smiles, puts forth her foot
And lifts her arm to wake the castanets.
Juan advances, too, from out the ring
And bends to quit his lute; for now the scene
Is empty; Roldan weary, gathers pence,
Followed by Annibal with purse and stick.
The carpet lies a colored isle untrod,
Inviting feet: "The dance, the dance," resounds,
The bow entreats with slow melodic strain,
And all the air with expectation yearns.

Sudden, with gliding motion like a flame
That through dim vapor makes a path of glory,
A figure lithe, all white and saffron-robed,
Flashed right across the circle, and now stood
With ripened arms uplift and regal head,
Like some tall flower whose dark and intense heart
Lies half within a tulip-tinted cup.

Juan stood fixed and pale; Pepíta stepped
Backward within the ring: the voices fell
From shouts insistent to more passive tones
Half meaning welcome, half astonishment.
"Lady Fedalma!—will she dance for us?"

But she, sole swayed by impulse passionate,
Feeling all life was music and all eyes
The warming quickening light that music makes,
Moved as, in dance religious, Miriam,
When on the Red Sea shore she raised her voice
And led the chorus of the people's joy;
Or as the Trojan maids that reverent sang
Watching the sorrow-crownèd Hecuba:
Moved in slow curves voluminous, gradual,
Feeling and action flowing into one,
In Eden's natural taintless marriage-bond;

Ardently modest, sensuously pure,
With young delight that wonders at itself
And throbs as innocent as opening flowers,
Knowing not comment—soilless, beautiful.
The spirit in her gravely glowing face
With sweet community informs her limbs,
Filling their fine gradation with the breath
Of virgin majesty; as full voweled words
Are new impregnate with the master's thought.
Even the chance-strayed delicate tendrils black,
That backward 'scape from out her wreathing hair—
Even the pliant folds that cling transverse
When with obliquely soaring bend altern
She seems a goddess quitting earth again—
Gather expression—a soft undertone
And resonance exquisite from the grand chord
Of her harmoniously bodied soul.

At first a reverential silence guards
The eager senses of the gazing crowd:
They hold their breath, and live by seeing her.
But soon the admiring tension finds relief—
Sighs of delight, applausive murmurs low,
And stirrings gentle as of earèd corn
Or seed-bent grasses, when the ocean's breath
Spreads landward. Even Juan is impelled
By the swift-traveling movement: fear and doubt
Give way before the hurrying energy;
He takes his lute and strikes in fellowship,
Filling more full the rill of melody
Raised ever and anon to clearest flood
By Pablo's voice, that dies away too soon,
Like the sweet blackbird's fragmentary chant,
Yet wakes again, with varying rise and fall,
In songs that seem emergent memories
Prompting brief utterance—little cancións
And villancicos, Andalusia-born.

PABLO (*sings*).

It was in the prime
Of the sweet Spring-time.
In the linnet's throat
Trembled the love-note,
And the love stirred air

Thrilled the blossoms there.
Little shadows danced
Each a tiny elf,
Happy in large light
And the thinnest self.

It was but a minute
In a far-off Spring,
But each gentle thing,
Sweetly-wooing linnet,
Soft-thrilled hawthorn tree,
Happy shadowy elf
With the thinnest self,
Live still on in me.
O the sweet, sweet prime
Of the past Spring-time!

And still the light is changing: high above
Float soft pink clouds; others with deeper flush
Stretch like flamingos bending toward the south.
Comes a more solemn brilliance o'er the sky
A meaning more intense upon the air—
The inspiration of the dying day.
And Juan now, when Pablo's notes subside,
Soothes the regretful ear, and breaks the pause
With masculine voice in deep antiphony.

JUAN (*sings*).

Day is dying! Float, O song,
Down the westward river,
Requiem chanting to the Day—
Day, the mighty Giver.

Pierced by shafts of Time he bleeds,
Melted rubies sending
Through the river and the sky,
Earth and heaven blending;

All the long-drawn earthy banks
Up to cloud-land lifting:
Slow between them drifts the swan,
'Twixt two heavens drifting.

Wings half open, like a flow'r
Inly deeper flushing,
Neck and breast as virgin's pure—
Virgin proudly blushing.

Day is dying! Float, O swan,
Down the ruby river;
Follow, song, in requiem
To the mighty Giver.

The exquisite hour, the ardor of the crowd,
The strains more plenteous, and the gathering migh
Of action passionate where no effort is,
But self's poor gates open to rushing power
That blends the inward ebb and outward vast—
All gathering influences culminate
And urge Fedalma. Earth and heaven seem one,
Life a glad trembling on the outer edge
Of unknown rapture. Swifter now she moves,
Filling the measure with a double beat
And widening circle; now she seems to glow
With more declarèd presence, glorified.
Circling, she lightly bends and lifts on high
The multitudinous-sounding tambourine,
And makes it ring and boom, then lifts it higher
Stretching her left arm beauteous; now the crowd
Exultant shouts, forgetting poverty
In the rich moment of possessing her.

But sudden, at one point, the exultant throng
Is pushed and hustled, and then thrust apart;
Something approaches—something cuts the ring
Of jubilant idlers—startling as a streak
From alien wounds across the blooming flesh
Of careless sporting childhood. 'Tis the band
Of Gypsy prisoners. Soldiers lead the van
And make sparse flanking guard, aloof surveyed
By gallant Lopez, stringent in command.
The Gypsies chained in couples, all save one,
Walk in dark file with grand bare legs and arms
And savage melancholy in their eyes
That star-like gleam from out black clouds of hair;
Now they are full in sight; and now they stretch
Right to the center of the open space.
Fedalma now, with gentle wheeling sweep

Returning, like the loveliest of the Hours
Strayed from her sisters, truant lingering,
Faces again the center, swings again
The unlifted tambourine——
When lo! with sound
Stupendous throbbing, solemn as a voice
Sent by the invisible choir of all the dead,
Tolls the great passing bell that calls to prayer
For souls departed: at the mighty beat
It seems the light sinks awe-struck—'tis the note
Of the sun's burial; speech and action pause;
Religious silence and the holy sign
Of everlasting memories (the sign
Of death that turned to more diffusive life)
Pass o'er the Plaça. Little children gaze
With lips apart, and feel the unknown god;
And the most men and women pray. Not all.
The soldiers pray; the Gypsies stand unmoved
As pagan statues with proud level gaze.
But he who wears a solitary chain
Heading the file, has turned to face Fedalma.
She motionless, with arm uplifted, guards
The tambourine aloft (lest, sudden-lowered,
Its trivial jingle mar the duteous pause),
Reveres the general prayer, but prays not, stands
With level glance meeting the Gypsy's eyes,
That seem to her the sadness of the world
Rebuking her, the great bell's hidden thought
Now first unveiled—the sorrows unredeemed
Of races outcast, scorned, and wandering.
Why does he look at her? why she at him?
As if the meeting light between their eyes
Made permanent union? His deep-knit brow,
Inflated nostril, scornful lip compressed,
Seem a dark hieroglyph of coming fate
Written before her. Father Isidor
Had terrible eyes and was her ememy;
She knew it and defied him; all her soul
Rounded and hardened in its separateness
When they encountered. But this prisoner—
This Gypsy, passing, gazing casually—
Was he her enemy too? She stood all quelled,
The impetuous joy that hurried in her veins
Seemed backward rushing turned to chillest awe,
Uneasy wonder, and a vague self-doubt.

The minute brief stretched measureless, dream-filled
By a dilated new-fraught consciousness.

Now it was gone; the pious murmur ceased,
The Gypsies all moved onward at command
And careless noises blent confusedly.
But the ring closed again, and many ears
Waited for Pablo's music, many eyes
Turned toward the carpet: it lay bare and dim,
Twilight was there—the bright Fedalma gone.

A handsome room in the Castle. On a table a rich jewel-casket.

Silva had doffed his mail and with it all
The heavier harness of his warlike cares.
He had not seen Fedalma; miser-like
He hoarded through the hour a costlier joy
By longing oft-repressed. Now it was earned;
And with observance wonted he would send
To ask admission. Spanish gentlemen
Who wooed fair dames of noble ancestry
Did homage with rich tunics and slashed sleeves
And outward-surging linen's costly snow;
With broidered scarf transverse, and rosary
Handsomely wrought to fit high-blooded prayer;
So hinting in how deep respect they held
That self they threw before their lady's feet.
And Silva—that Fedalma's rate should stand
No jot below the highest, that her love
Might seem to all the royal gift it was—
Turned every trifle in his mien and garb
To scrupulous language, uttering to the world
That since she loved him he went carefully,
Bearing a thing so precious in his hand.
A man of high-wrought strain, fastidious
In his acceptance, dreading all delight
That speedy dies and turns to carrion:
His senses much exacting, deep instilled
With keen imagination's airy needs;—
Like strong-limbed monsters studded o'er with eyes,
Their hunger checked by overwhelming vision,
Or that fierce lion in symbolic dream
Snatched from the ground by wings and new-endowed
With a man's thought-propelled relenting heart.

Silva was both the lion and the man;
First hesitating shrank, then fiercely sprang,
Or having sprung, turned pallid at his deed
And loosed the prize, paying his blood for naught.
A nature half-transformed, with qualities
That oft bewrayed each other, elements
Not blent but struggling, breeding strange effects,
Passing the reckoning of his friends or foes.
Haughty and generous, grave and passionate;
With tidal moments of devoutest awe,
Sinking anon to farthest ebb of doubt;
Deliberating ever, till the string
Of a recurrent ardor made him rush
Right against reasons that himself had drilled
And marshaled painfully. A spirit framed
Too proudly special for obedience,
Too subtly pondering for mastery:
Born of a goddess with a mortal sire,
Heir of flesh-fettered, weak divinity,
Doom-gifted with long resonant consciousness
And perilous heightening of the sentient soul.
But look less curiously: life itself
May not express us all, may leave the worst
And the best too, like tunes in mechanism
Never awaked. In various catalogues
Objects stand variously. Silva stands
As a young Spaniard, handsome, noble, brave,
With titles many, high in pedigree;
Or, as a nature quiveringly poised
In reach of storms, whose qualities may turn
To murdered virtues that still walk as ghosts
Within the shuddering soul and shriek remorse;
Or, as a lover —— In the screening time
Of purple blossoms, when the petals crowd
And softly crush like cherub cheeks in heaven,
Who thinks of greenly withered fruit and worms?
O the warm southern spring is beauteous!
And in love's spring all good seems possible:
No threats, all promise, brooklets ripple full
And bathe the rushes, vicious crawling things
Are pretty eggs, the sun shines graciously
And parches not, the silent rain beats warm
As childhood's kisses, days are young and grow,
And earth seems in its sweet beginning time
Fresh made for two who live in Paradise.

Silva is in love's spring, its freshness breathed
Within his soul along the dusty ways
While marching homeward; 'tis around him now
As in a garden fenced in for delight,—
And he may seek delight. Smiling he lifts
A whistle from his belt, but lets it fall
Ere it has reached his lips, jarred by the sound
Of usher's knocking, and a voice that craves
Admission for the Prior of San Domingo.

PRIOR (*entering*).

You look perturbed, my son. I thrust myself
Between you and some beckoning intent
That wears a face more smiling than my own.

DON SILVA.

Father, enough that you are here. I wait,
As always, your commands—nay, should have sought
An early audience.

PRIOR.

To give, I trust,
Good reasons for your change of policy?

DON SILVA.

Strong reasons, father.

PRIOR.

Ay, but are they good?
I have known reasons strong, but strongly evil.

DON SILVA.

'Tis possible. I but deliver mine
To your strict judgment. Late dispatches sent
With urgence by the Count of Bavien,
No hint on my part prompting, with besides
The testified concurrence of the king
And our Grand Master, have made peremptory
The course which else had been but rational.
Without the forces furnished by allies
The siege of Guadix would be madness. More,
El Zagal has his eyes upon Bedmár:

Let him attempt it: in three weeks from hence
The Master and the Lord of Aguilar
Will bring their forces. We shall catch the Moors,
The last gleaned clusters of their bravest men,
As in a trap. You have my reasons, father.

PRIOR.

And they sound well. But free-tongued rumor adds
A pregnant supplement—in substance this:
That inclination snatches arguments
To make indulgence seem judicious choice;
That you, commanding in God's Holy War,
Lift prayers to Satan to retard the fight
And give you time for feasting—wait a siege,
Call daring enterprise impossible,
Because you'd marry! You, a Spanish duke,
Christ's general, would marry like a clown,
Who, selling fodder dearer for the war,
Is all the merrier; nay, like the brutes,
Who know no awe to check their appetite,
Coupling 'mid heaps of slain, while still in front
The battle rages.

DON SILVA.

Rumor on your lips
Is eloquent, father.

PRIOR.

Is she true?

DON SILVA.

Perhaps.
I seek to justify my public acts
And not my private joy. Before the world
Enough if I am faithful in command,
Betray not by my deeds, swerve from no task
My knightly vows constrain me to: herein
I ask all men to test me.

PRIOR.

Knightly vows?
Is it by their constraint that you must marry?

DON SILVA.

Marriage is not a breach of them. I use
A sanctioned liberty——your pardon, father,
I need not teach you what the Church decrees.
But facts may weaken texts, and so dry up
The fount of eloquence. The Church relaxed
Our Order's rule before I took the vows.

PRIOR.

Ignoble liberty! you snatch your rule
From what God tolerates, not what he loves?—
Inquire what lowest offering may suffice,
Cheapen it meanly to an obolus,
Buy, and then count the coin left in your purse
For your debauch?—Measure obedience
By scantest powers of brethren whose frail flesh
Our Holy Church indulges?—Ask great Law,
The rightful Sovereign of the human soul,
For what it pardons, not what it commands?
O fallen knighthood, penitent of high vows,
Asking a charter to degrade itself!
Such poor apology of rules relaxed
Blunts not suspicion of that doubleness
Your enemies tax you with.

DON SILVA.

Oh, for the rest,
Conscience is harder than our enemies,
Knows more, accuses with more nicety,
Nor needs to question Rumor if we fall
Below the perfect model of our thought.
I fear no outward arbiter.—You smile?

PRIOR.

Ay, at the contrast 'twixt your portraiture
And the true image of your conscience, shown
As now I see it in your acts. I see
A drunken sentinel who gives alarm
At his own shadow, but when scalers snatch
His weapon from his hand smiles idiot-like
At games he's dreaming of.

DON SILVA.

A parable!
The husk is rough—holds something bitter, doubtless.

PRIOR.

Oh, the husk gapes with meaning over-ripe.
You boast a conscience that controls your deeds,
Watches your knightly armor, guards your rank
From stain of treachery—you, helpless slave,
Whose will lies nerveless in the clutch of lust—
Of blind mad passion—passion itself most helpless,
Storm-driven, like the monsters of the sea.
O famous conscience!

DON SILVA.

Pause there! Leave unsaid
Aught that will match that text. More were too much,
Even from holy lips. I own no love
But such as guards my honor, since it guards
Hers whom I love! I suffer no foul words
To stain the gift I lay before her feet;
And, being hers, my honor is more safe.

PRIOR.

Versemakers' talk! fit for a world of rhymes,
Where facts are feigned to tickle idle ears,
Where good and evil play at tournament
And end in amity—a world of lies—
A carnival of words where every year
Stale falsehoods serve fresh men. Your honor safe?
What honor has a man with double bonds?
Honor is shifting as the shadows are
To souls that turn their passions into laws.
A Christian knight who weds an infidel ——

DON SILVA (*fiercely*).

An infidel!

PRIOR.

May one day spurn the Cross,
And call that honor!—one day find his sword
Stained with his brother's blood, and call that honor!

Apostates' honor?—harlots' chastity!
Renegades' faithfulness?—Iscariot's!

DON SILVA.

Strong words and burning; but they scorch not me.
Fedalma is a daughter of the Church—
Has been baptized and nurtured in the faith.

PRIOR.

Ay, as a thousand Jewesses, who yet
Are brides of Satan in a robe of flames.

DON SILVA.

Fedalma is no Jewess, bears no marks
That tell of Hebrew blood.

PRIOR.

She bears the marks
Of races unbaptized, that never bowed
Before the holy signs, were never moved
By stirrings of the sacramental gifts.

DON SILVA (*scornfully*).

Holy accusers practice palmistry,
And, other witness lacking, read the skin.

PRIOR.

I read a deeper record than the skin.
What! Shall the trick of nostrils and of lips
Descend through generations, and the soul
That moves within our frame like God in worlds—
Convulsing, urging, melting, withering—
Imprint no record, leave no documents,
Of her great history? Shall men bequeath
The fancies of their palate to their sons,
And shall the shudder of restraining awe,
The slow-wept tears of contrite memory,
Faith's prayerful labor, and the food divine
Of fasts ecstatic—shall these pass away
Like wind upon the waters, tracklessly?
Shall the mere curl of eyelashes remain,

And god-enshrining symbols leave no trace
Of tremors reverent?—That maiden's blood
Is as unchristian as the leopard's.

DON SILVA.

Say,
Unchristian as the Blessed Virgin's blood
Before the angel spoke the word, "All hail!"

PRIOR (*smiling bitterly*).

Said I not truly? See, your passion weaves
Already blasphemies!

DON SILVA.

'Tis you provoke them.

PRIOR.

I strive, as still the Holy Spirit strives,
To move the will perverse. But, failing this,
God commands other means to save our blood,
To save Castilian glory—nay, to save
The name of Christ from blot of traitorous deeds.

DON SILVA.

Of traitorous deeds! Age, kindred, and your cowl,
Give an ignoble license to your tongue.
As for your threats, fulfill them at your peril.
'Tis you, not I, will gibbet our great name
To rot in infamy. If I am strong
In patience now, trust me, I can be strong
Then in defiance.

PRIOR.

Miserable man!
Your strength will turn to anguish, like the strength
Of fallen angels. Can you change your blood?
You are a Christian, with the Christian awe
In every vein. A Spanish noble, born
To serve your people and your people's faith.
Strong, are you? Turn your back upon the Cross—
Its shadow is before you. Leave your place:
Quit the great ranks of knighthood: you will walk

Forever with a tortured double self,
A self that will be hungry while you feast,
Will blush with shame while you are glorified,
Will feel the ache and chill of desolation,
Even in the very bosom of your love.
Mate yourself with this woman, fit for what?
To make the sport of Moorish palaces,
A lewd Herodias——

DON SILVA.

Stop! no other man,
Priest though he were, had had his throat left free
For passage of those words. I would have clutched
His serpent's neck, and flung him out to hell!
A monk must needs defile the name of love;
He knows it but as tempting devils paint it.
You think to scare my love from its resolve
With arbitrary consequences, strained
By rancorous effort from the thinnest motes
Of possibility?—cite hideous lists
Of sins irrelevant, to frighten me
With bugbears' names, as women fright a child?
Poor pallid wisdom, taught by inference
From blood-drained life, where phantom terrors rule,
And all achievement is to leave undone!
Paint the day dark, make sunshine cold to me,
Abolish the earth's fairness, prove it all
A fiction of my eyes—then, after that,
Profane Fedalma.

PRIOR.

O there is no need:
She has profaned herself. Go, raving man,
And see her dancing now. Go, see your bride
Flaunting her beauties grossly in the gaze
Of vulgar idlers—eking out the show
Made in the Plaça by a mountebank.
I hinder you no farther.

DON SILVA.

It is false!

PRIOR.

Go, prove it false, then.

[Father Isidor
Drew on his cowl and turned away. The face
That flashed anathemas, in swift eclipse
Seemed Silva's vanished confidence. In haste
He rushed unsignaled through the corridor
To where the Duchess once, Fedalma now,
Had residence retired from din of arms—
Knocked, opened, found all empty—said
With muffled voice, "Fedalma!"—called more loud,
More oft on Iñez, the old trusted nurse—
Then searched the terrace-garden, calling still,
But heard no answering sound, and saw no face
Save painted faces staring all unmoved
By agitated tones. He hurried back,
Giving half-conscious orders as he went
To page and usher, that they straight should seek
Lady Fedalma; then with stinging shame
Wished himself silent; reached again the room
Where still the Father's menace seemed to hang
Thickening the air; snatched cloak and plumèd hat,
And grasped, not knowing why, his poniard's hilt;
Then checked himself and said:—]

If he spoke truth!
To know were wound enough—to see the truth
Were fire upon the wound. It must be false!
His hatred saw amiss, or snatched mistake
In other men's report. I am a fool!
But where can she be gone? gone secretly?
And in my absence? Oh, she meant no wrong!
I am a fool!—But where can she be gone?
With only Iñez? Oh, she meant no wrong!
I swear she never meant it. There's no wrong
But she would make it momentary right
By innocence in doing it——
And yet,
What is our certainty? Why, knowing all
That is not secret. Mighty confidence!
One pulse of Time makes the base hollow—sends
The towering certainty we built so high
Toppling in fragments meaningless. What is—
What will be—must be—pooh! they weight the key
Of that which is not yet; all other keys
Are made of our conjectures, take their sense

From humors fooled by hope, or by despair.
Know what is good? O God, we know not yet
If bliss itself is not young misery
With fangs swift growing——
But some outward harm
May even now be hurting, grieving her.
Oh! I must search—face shame—if shame be there.
Here, Perez! hasten to Don Alvar—tell him
Lady Fedalma must be sought- -is lost—
Has met, I fear, some mischance. He must send
Toward divers points. I go myself to seek
First in the town——

[As Perez oped the door,
Then moved aside for passage of the Duke,
Fedalma entered, cast away the cloud
Of serge and linen, and out beaming bright,
Advanced a pace toward Silva—but then paused,
For he had started and retreated; she,
Quick and responsive as the subtle air
To change in him, divined that she must wait
Until they were alone: they stood and looked.
Within the Duke was struggling confluence
Of feelings manifold—pride, anger, dread,
Meeting in stormy rush with sense secure
That she was present, with the new-stilled thirst
Of gazing love, with trust inevitable
As in beneficent virtues of the light
And all earth's sweetness, that Fedalma's soul
Was free from blemishing purpose. Yet proud wrath
Leaped in dark flood above the purer stream
That strove to drown it: Anger seeks its prey—
Something to tear with sharp-edged tooth and claw,
Likes not to go off hungry, leaving love
To feast on milk and honeycomb at will.
Silva's heart said, he must be happy soon,
She being there; but to be happy—first
He must be angry, having cause. Yet love
Shot like a stifled cry of tenderness
All through the harshness he would fain have given
To the dear word,]

DON SILVA.

Fedalma!

FEDALMA.

O my lord!
You are come back, and I was wandering!

DON SILVA (*coldly, but with suppressed agitation*).

You meant I should be ignorant.

FEDALMA.

Oh, no,
I should have told you after—not before,
Lest you should hinder me.

DON SILVA.

Then my known wish
Can make no hindrance?

FEDALMA (*archly*).

That depends
On what the wish may be. You wished me once
Not to uncage the birds. I meant to obey:
But in a moment something—something stronger,
Forced me to let them out. It did no harm.
They all came back again—the silly birds!
I told you, after.

DON SILVA (*with haughty coldness*).

Will you tell me now
What was the prompting stronger than my wish
That made you wander?

FEDALMA (*advancing a step toward him, with a sudden look of anxiety*).

Are you angry?

DON SILVA (*smiling bitterly*).

Angry?
A man deep wounded may feel too much pain
To feel much anger.

FEDALMA (*still more anxiously*).

You—deep-wounded?

DON SILVA.

Yes!
Have I not made your place and dignity
The very heart of my ambition? You—
No enemy could do it—you alone
Can strike it mortally.

FEDALMA.

Nay, Silva, nay.
Has some one told you false? I only went
To see the world with Iñez—see the town,
The people, everything. It was no harm.
I did not mean to dance: it happened so
At last ——

DON SILVA.

O God, it's true then!—true that you,
A maiden nurtured as rare flowers are,
The very air of heaven sifted fine
Lest any mote should mar your purity,
Have flung yourself out on the dusty way
For common eyes to see your beauty soiled!
You own it true—you danced upon the Plaça?

FEDALMA (*proudly*).

Yes, it is true. I was not wrong to dance.
The air was filled with music, with a song
That seemed the voice of the sweet eventide—
The glowing light entering through eye and ear—
That seemed our love—mine, yours—they are but one—
Trembling through all my limbs, as fervent words
Tremble within my soul and must be spoken.
And all the people felt a common joy
And shouted for the dance. A brightness soft
As of the angels moving down to see
Illumined the broad space. The joy, the life
Around, within me, were one heaven: I longed
To blend them visibly: I longed to dance
Before the people—be as mounting flame
To all that burned within them! Nay, I danced;
There was no longing: I but did the deed
Being moved to do it.

(*As* FEDALMA *speaks, she and* DON SILVA *are gradually drawn nearer to each other.*)

Oh! I seemed new-waked
To life in unison with a multitude—
Feeling my soul upborne by all their souls,
Floating within their gladness! Soon I lost
All sense of separateness: Fedalma died
As a star dies, and melts into the light.
I was not, but joy was, and love and triumph.
Nay, my dear lord, I never could do aught
But I must feel you present. And once done,
Why, you must love it better than your wish.
I pray you, say so—say, it was not wrong!

(*While* FEDALMA *has been making this last appeal, they have gradually come close together, and at last embrace.*)

DON SILVA (*holding her hands*).

Dangerous rebel! if the world without
Were pure as that within——but 'tis a book
Wherein you only read the poesy
And miss all wicked meanings. Hence the need
For trust—obedience—call it what you will—
Toward him whose life will be your guard—toward me
Who now am soon to be your husband.

FEDALMA.

Yes!
That very thing that when I am your wife
I shall be something different,—shall be
I know not what, a Duchess with new thoughts—
For nobles never think like common men,
Nor wives like maidens (Oh, you wot not yet
How much I note, with all my ignorance)—
That very thing has made me more resolve
To have my will before I am your wife.
How can the Duchess ever satisfy
Fedalma's unwed eyes? and so to-day
I scolded Iñez till she cried and went.

DON SILVA.

It was a guilty weakness: she knows well
That since you pleaded to be left more free

From tedious tendance and control of dames
Whose rank matched better with your destiny,
Her charge—my trust—was weightier.

FEDALMA.

Nay, my lord,
You must not blame her, dear old nurse. She cried,
Why, you would have consented too, at last.
I said such things! I was resolved to go,
And see the streets, the shops, the men at work,
The women, little children—everything,
Just as it is when nobody looks on.
And I have done it! We were out for hours.
I feel so wise.

DON SILVA.

Had you but seen the town,
You innocent naughtiness, not shown yourself—
Shown yourself dancing—you bewilder me!—
Frustrate my judgment with strange negatives
That seem like poverty, and yet are wealth
In precious womanliness, beyond the dower
Of other women: wealth in virgin gold,
Outweighing all their petty currency.
You daring modesty! You shrink no more
From gazing men than from the gazing flowers
That, dreaming sunshine, open as you pass.

FEDALMA.

No, I should like the world to look at me
With eyes of love that make a second day.
I think your eyes would keep the life in me
Though I had naught to feed on else. Their blue
Is better than the heavens'—holds more love
For me, Fedalma—is a little heaven
For this one little world that looks up now.

DON SILVA.

O precious little world! you make the heaven
As the earth makes the sky. But, dear, all eyes,
Though looking even on you, have not a glance
That cherishes——

FEDALMA.

Ah no, I meant to tell you—
Tell how my dancing ended with a pang.
There came a man, one among many more,
But *he* came first, with iron on his limbs.
And when the bell tolled, and the people prayed,
And I stood pausing—then he looked at me.
O Silva, such a man! I thought he rose
From the dark place of long-imprisoned souls,
To say that Christ had never come to them.
It was a look to shame a seraph's joy,
And make him sad in heaven. It found me there—
Seemed to have traveled far to find me there
And grasp me—claim this festal life of mine
As heritage of sorrow, chill my blood
With the cold iron of some unknown bonds.
The gladness hurrying full within my veins
Was sudden frozen, and I danced no more.
But seeing you let loose the stream of joy,
Mingling the present with the sweetest past.
Yet, Silva, still I see him. Who is he?
Who are those prisoners with him? Are they Moors?

DON SILVA.

No, they are Gypsies, strong and cunning knaves,
A double gain to us by the Moors' loss:
The man you mean—their chief—is an ally
The infidel will miss. His look might chase
A herd of monks, and make them fly more swift
Than from Saint Jerome's lion. Such vague fear,
Such bird-like tremors when that savage glance
Turned full upon you in your height of joy
Was natural, was not worth emphasis.
Forget it, dear. This hour is worth whole days
When we are sundered. Danger urges us
To quick resolve.

FEDALMA.

What danger? what resolve?
I never felt chill shadow in my heart
Until this sunset.

DON SILVA.

A dark enmity
Plots how to sever us. And our defense

Is speedy marriage, secretly achieved,
Then publicly declared. Beseech you, dear,
Grant me this confidence; do my will in this,
Trusting the reasons why I overset
All my own airy building raised so high
Of bridal honors, marking when you step
From off your maiden throne to come to me
And bear the yoke of love. There is great need.
I hastened home, carrying this prayer to you
Within my heart. The bishop is my friend,
Furthers our marriage, holds in enmity—
Some whom we love not and who love not us.
By this night's moon our priest will be dispatched
From Jaën. I shall march an escort strong
To meet him. Ere a second sun from this
Has risen—you consenting—we may wed.

FEDALMA.

None knowing that we wed?

DON SILVA.

Beforehand none
Save Iñez and Don Alvar. But the vows
Once safely binding us, my household all
Shall know you as their Duchess. No man then
Can aim a blow at you but through my breast,
And what stains you must stain our ancient name;
If any hate you I will take his hate,
And wear it as a glove upon my helm;
Nay, God himself will never have the power
To strike you solely and leave me unhurt,
He having made us one. Now put the seal
Of your dear lips on that.

FEDALMA.

A solemn kiss?—
Such as I gave you when you came that day
From Córdova, when first we said we loved?
When you had left the ladies of the Court
For thirst to see me; and you told me so,
And then I seemed to know why I had lived.
I never knew before. A kiss like that?

DON SILVA.

Yes, yes, you face divine! When was our kiss
Like any other?

FEDALMA.

Nay, I cannot tell
What other kisses are. But that one kiss
Remains upon my lips. The angels, spirits,
Creatures with finer sense, may see it there.
And now another kiss that will not die,
Saying, To-morrow I shall be your wife!

(*They kiss, and pause a moment, looking earnestly in each other's eyes. Then* FEDALMA, *breaking away from* DON SILVA, *stands at a little distance from him with a look of roguish delight.*)

Now I am glad I saw the town to-day
Before I am a Duchess—glad I gave
This poor Fedalma all her wish. For once,
Long years ago, I cried when Iñez said,
"You are no more a little girl"; I grieved
To part forever from that little girl
And all her happy world so near the ground.
It must be sad to outlive aught we love.
So I shall grieve a little for these days
Of poor unwed Fedalma. Oh, they are sweet,
And none will come just like them. Perhaps the wind
Wails so in winter for the summer's dead,
And all sad sounds are nature's funeral cries
For what has been and is not. Are they, Silva?

(*She comes nearer to him again, and lays her hand on his arm, looking up at him with melancholy.*)

DON SILVA.

Why, dearest, you began in merriment,
And end as sadly as a widowed bird.
Some touch mysterious has new-tuned your soul
To melancholy sequence. You soared high
In that wild flight of rapture when you danced,
And now you droop. 'Tis arbitrary grief,
Surfeit of happiness, that mourns for loss
Of unwed love, which does but die like seed

For fuller harvest of our tenderness.
We in our wedded life shall know no loss.
We shall new-date our years What went before
Will be the time of promise, shadows, dreams;
But this, full revelation of great love.
For rivers blent take in a broader heaven,
And we shall blend our souls. Away with grief!
When this dear head shall wear the double crown
Of wife and duchess—spiritually crowned
With sworn espousal before God and man—
Visibly crowned with jewels that bespeak
The chosen sharer of my heritage—
My love will gather perfectness, as thoughts
That nourish us to magnanimity
Grow perfect with more perfect utterance,
Gathering full-shapen strength. And then these gems,

(DON SILVA *draws* FEDALMA *toward the jewel-casket on the table, and opens it.*)

Helping the utterance of my soul's full choice,
Will be the words made richer by just use,
And have new meaning in their lustrousness.
You know these jewels; they are precious signs
Of long-transmitted honor, heightened still
By worthy wearing; and I give them you—
Ask you to take them—place our house's trust
In her sure keeping whom my heart has found
Worthiest, most beauteous. These rubies—see—
Were falsely placed if not upon your brow.

(FEDALMA, *while* DON SILVA *holds open the casket, bends over it, looking at the jewels with delight.*)

FEDALMA.

Ah, I remember them. In childish days
I felt as if they were alive and breathed.
I used to sit with awe and look at them.
And now they will be mine! I'll put them on.
Help me, my lord, and you shall see me now
Somewhat as I shall look at Court with you,
That we may know if I shall bear them well.
I have a fear sometimes: I think your love
Has never paused within your eyes to look,

And only passes through them into mine.
But when the Court is looking, and the queen,
Your eyes will follow theirs. Oh, if you saw
That I was other than you wished—'twere death!

DON SILVA (*taking up a jewel and placing it against her ear*).

Nay, let us try. Take out your ear-ring, sweet.
This ruby glows with longing for your ear.

FEDALMA (*taking out her ear-rings, and then lifting up the other jewels, one by one.*

Pray, fasten in the rubies.

(DON SILVA *begins to put in the ear-ring.*)

I was right!
These gems have life in them: their colors speak,
Say what words fail of. So do many things—
The scent of jasmine, and the fountain's plash,
The moving shadows on the far-off hills,
The slanting moonlight, and our clasping hands.
O Silva, there's an ocean round our words
That overflows and drowns them. Do you know
Sometimes when we sit silent, and the air
Breathes gently on us from the orange trees,
It seems that with the whisper of a word
Our souls must shrink, get poorer, more apart.
Is it not true?

DON SILVA.

Yes, dearest, it is true.
Speech is but broken light upon the depth
Of the unspoken: even your loved words
Float in the larger meaning of your voice
As something dimmer.

(*He is still trying in vain to fasten the second ear-ring, while she has stooped again over the casket.*)

FEDALMA (*raising her head*).

Ah! your lordly hands
Will never fix that jewel. Let me try.
Women's small finger-tips have eyes,

DON SILVA.

No, no!
I like the task, only you must be still.

(*She stands perfectly still, clasping her hands together while he fastens the second ear-ring. Suddenly a clanking noise is heard without.*)

FEDALMA (*starting with an expression of pain*).

What is that sound?—that jarring cruel sound?
'Tis there—outside.

(*She tries to start away toward the window, but* DON SILVA *detains her.*)

DON SILVA.

O heed it not, it comes
From workmen in the outer gallery.

FEDALMA.

It is the sound of fetters; sound of work
Is not so dismal. Hark, they pass along!
I know it is those Gypsy prisoners.
I saw them, heard their chains. O horrible,
To be in chains! Why, I with all my bliss
Have longed sometimes to fly and be at large;
Have felt imprisoned in my luxury
With servants for my gaolers. O my lord,
Do you not wish the world were different?

DON SILVA.

It will be different when this war has ceased.
You, wedding me, will make it different,
Making one life more perfect.

FEDALMA.

That is true!
And I shall beg much kindness at your hands
For those who are less happy than ourselves.—
(*Brightening*) Oh I shall rule you! ask for many things
Before the world, which you will not deny
For very pride, lest men should say, "The Duke
Holds lightly by his Duchess; he repents
His humble choice.

(*She breaks away from him and returns to the jewels, taking up a necklace, and clasping it on her neck, while he takes a circlet of diamonds and rubies and raises it toward her head as he speaks.*)

DON SILVA.

Doubtless, I shall persist
In loving you, to disappoint the world;
Out of pure obstinacy feel myself
Happiest of men. Now, take the coronet.

(*He places the circlet on her head.*)

The diamonds want more light. See, from this lamp
I can set tapers burning.

FEDALMA.

Tell me, now,
When all these cruel wars are at an end,
And when we go to Court at Córdova,
Or Seville, or Toledo—wait awhile,
I must be farther off for you to see—

(*She retreats to a distance from him, and then advances slowly.*)

Now think (I would the tapers gave more light!)
If when you show me at the tournaments
Among the other ladies, they will say,
"Duke Silva is well matched. His bride was naught,
Was some poor foster-child, no man knows what;
Yet is her carriage noble, all her robes
Are worn with grace: she might have been well born."
Will they say so? Think now we are at Court,
And all eyes bent on me.

DON SILVA.

Fear not, my Duchess!
Some knight who loves may say his lady-love
Is fairer, being fairest. None can say
Don Silva's bride might better fit her rank.
You will make rank seem natural as kind,
As eagle's plumage or the lion's might.
A crown upon your brow would seem God-made,

FEDALMA.

Then I am glad! I shall try on to-night
The other jewels—have the tapers lit,
And see the diamonds sparkle.

(*She goes to the casket again.*)

Here is gold—
A necklace of pure gold—most finely wrought.

(*She takes out a large gold necklace and holds it up before her, then turns to* DON SILVA.)

But this is one that you have worn, my lord?

DON SILVA.

No, love, I never wore it. Lay it down.

(*He puts the necklace gently out of her hand, then joins both her hands and holds them up between his own.*)

You must not look at jewels any more,
But look at me.

FEDALMA (*looking up at him*).

O you dear heaven!
I should see naught if you were gone. 'Tis true
My mind is too much given to gauds—to things
That fetter thought within this narrow space.
That comes of fear.

DON SILVA.

What fear?

FEDALMA.

Fear of myself.
For when I walk upon the battlements
And see the river traveling toward the plain,
The mountains screening all the world beyond,
A longing comes that haunts me in my dreams—
Dreams where I seem to spring from off the walls,
And fly far, far away, until at last
I find myself alone among the rocks,

Remember then that I have left you—try
To fly back to you—and my wings are gone!

DON SILVA.

A wicked dream! If ever I left you,
Even in dreams, it was some demon dragged me,
And with fierce struggles I awaked myself.

FEDALMA.

It is a hateful dream, and when it comes—
I mean, when in my waking hours there comes
That longing to be free, I am afraid:
I run down to my chamber, plait my hair,
Weave colors in it, lay out all my gauds,
And in my mind make new ones prettier.
You see I have two minds, and both are foolish.
Sometimes a torrent rushing through my soul
Escapes in wild strange wishes; presently,
It dwindles to a little babbling rill
And plays among the pebbles and the flowers.
Iñez will have it I lack broidery,
Says naught else gives content to noble maids.
But I have never broidered—never will.
No, when I am a Duchess and a wife
I shall ride forth—may I not?—by your side.

DON SILVA.

Yes, you shall ride upon a palfrey, black
To match Bavieca. Not Queen Isabel
Will be a sight more gladdening to men's eyes
Than my dark queen Fedalma.

FEDALMA.

Ah, but you,
You are my king, and I shall tremble still
With some great fear that throbs within my love.
Does your love fear?

DON SILVA.

Ah, yes! all preciousness
To mortal hearts is guarded by a fear.
All love fears loss, and most that loss supreme,
Its own perfection—seeing, feeling change

From high to lower, dearer to less dear.
Can love be careless? If we lost our love
What should we find?—with this sweet Past torn off,
Our lives deep scarred just where their beauty lay?
The best we found thenceforth were still a worse:
The only better is a Past that lives
On through an added Present, stretching still
In hope unchecked by shaming memories
To life's last breath. And so I tremble too
Before my queen Fedalma.

FEDALMA.

That is just.
'Twere hard of Love to make us women fear
And leave you bold. Yet Love is not quite even.
For feeble creatures, little birds and fawns,
Are shaken more by fear, while large strong things
Can bear it stoutly. So we women still
Are not well dealt with. Yet I'd choose to be
Fedalma loving Silva. You, my lord,
Hold the worse share, since you must love poor me.
But is it what we love, or how we love,
That makes true good?

DON SILVA.

O subtlety! for me
'Tis what I love determines how I love.
The goddess with pure rites reveals herself
And makes pure worship.

FEDALMA.

Do you worship me?

DON SILVA.

Ay, with that best of worship which adores
Goodness adorable.

FEDALMA (*archly*).

Goodness obedient,
Doing your will, devoutest worshiper?

DON SILVA.

Yes—listening to this prayer. This very night
I shall go forth. And you will rise with day
And wait for me?

FEDALMA.

Yes.

DON SILVA.

I shall surely come.
And then we shall be married. Now I go
To audience fixed in Abderahman's tower.
Farewell, love!

(*They embrace.*)

FEDALMA.

Some chill dread possesses me!

DON SILVA.

Oh, confidence has oft been evil augury,
So dread may hold a promise. Sweet, farewell!
I shall send tendance as I pass, to bear
This casket to your chamber.—One more kiss.

(*Exit.*)

FEDALMA (*when* DON SILVA *is gone, returning to the casket, and looking dreamily at the jewels*).

Yes, now that good seems less impossible!
Now it seems true that I shall be his wife,
Be ever by his side, and make a part
In all his purposes——
These rubies greet me Duchess. How they glow!
Their prisoned souls are throbbing like my own.
Perchance they loved once, were ambitious, proud;
Or do they only dream of wider life,
Ache from intenseness, yearn to burst the wall
Compact of crystal splendor, and to flood
Some wider space with glory? Poor, poor gems!
We must be patient in our prison-house,
And find our space in loving. Pray you, love me.
Let us be glad together. And you, gold—

(*She takes up the gold necklace.*)

You wondrous necklace—will you love me too,
And be my amulet to keep me safe
From eyes that hurt?

(*She spreads out the necklace, meaning to clasp it on her neck. Then pauses, startled, holding it before her.*)

Why, it is magical!
He says he never wore it—yet these lines—
Nay, if he had, I should remember well
'Twas he, no other And these twisted lines—
They seem to speak to me as writing would,
To bring a message from the dead. dead past.
What is their secret? Are they characters?
I never learned them; yet they stir some sense
That once I dreamed—I have forgotten what.
Or was it life? Perhaps I lived before
In some strange world where first my soul was shaped,
And all this passionate love, and joy, and pain,
That come, I know not whence, and sway my deeds,
Are old imperious memories, blind yet strong,
That this world stirs within me; as this chain
Stirs some strange certainty of visions gone,
And all my mind is as an eye that stares
Into the darkness painfully.

(*While* FEDALMA *has been looking at the necklace,* JUAN *has entered, and finding himself unobserved by her, says at last.*)

Señora!

(FEDALMA *starts, and gathering the necklace together turns round.*)

Oh, Juan, it is you!

JUAN.

I met the Duke—
Had waited long without, no matter why—
And when he ordered one to wait on you
And carry forth a burden you would give,
I prayed for leave to be the servitor.
Don Silva owes me twenty granted wishes.

That I have never tendered, lacking aught
That I could wish for and a Duke could grant;
But this one wish to serve you, weighs as much
As twenty other longings.

FEDALMA (*smiling*).

That sounds well.
You turn your speeches prettily as songs.
But I will not forget the many days
You have neglected me. Your pupil learns
But little from you now. Her studies flag.
The Duke says, "That is idle Juan's way:
Poets must rove—are honey-sucking birds
And know not constancy." Said he quite true?

JUAN.

O lady, constancy has kind and rank.
One man's is lordly, plump, and bravely clad,
Holds its head high, and tells the world its name:
Another man's is beggared, must go bare,
And shiver through the world, the jest of all.
But that it puts the motley on, and plays
Itself the jester. But I see you hold
The Gypsy's necklace: it is quaintly wrought.

FEDALMA.

The Gypsy's? Do you know its history?

JUAN.

No farther back than when I saw it taken
From off its wearer's neck—the Gypsy chief's.

FEDALMA (*eagerly*).

What! he who paused, at tolling of the bell,
Before me in the Plaça?

JUAN.

Yes, I saw
His look fixed on you.

FEDALMA.

Know you aught of him?

JUAN.

Something and nothing—as I know the sky,
Or some great story of the olden time
That hides a secret. I have oft talked with him.
He seems to say much, yet is but a wizard
Who draws down rain by sprinkling; throws me out
Some pregnant text that urges comment; casts
A sharp-hooked question, baited with such skill
It needs must catch the answer.

FEDALMA.

It is hard
That such a man should be a prisoner—
Be chained to work.

JUAN.

Oh, he is dangerous!
Granáda with this Zarca for a king
Might still maim Christendom. He is of those
Who steal the keys from snoring Destiny
And make the prophets lie. A Gypsy, too,
Suckled by hunted beasts, whose mother-milk
Has filled his veins with hate.

FEDALMA.

I thought his eyes
Spoke not of hatred—seemed to say he bore
The pain of those who never could be saved.
What if the Gypsies are but savage beasts,
And must be hunted?—let them be set free,
Have benefit of chase, or stand at bay
And fight for life and offspring. Prisoners!
Oh! they have made their fires beside the streams,
Their walls have been the rocks, the pillared pines,
Their roof the living sky that breathes with light:
They may well hate a cage, like strong-winged birds,
Like me, who have no wings, but only wishes.
I will beseech the Duke to set them free.

JUAN.

Pardon me, lady, if I seem to warn,
Or try to play the sage. What if the Duke
Loved not to hear of Gypsies? if their name

Were poisoned for him once, being used amiss?
I speak not as of fact. Our nimble souls
Can spin an insubstantial universe
Suiting our mood, and call it possible,
Sooner than see one grain with eye exact
And give strict record of it. Yet by chance
Our fancies may be truth and make us seers.
'Tis a rare teeming world, so harvest-full,
Even guessing ignorance may pluck some fruit.
Note what I say no farther than will stead
The siege you lay. I would not seem to tell
Aught that the Duke may think and yet withhold:
It were a trespass in me.

FEDALMA.

Fear not, Juan.
Your words bring daylight with them when you speak.
I understand your care. But I am brave—
Oh! and so cunning!—always I prevail.
Now, honored Troubadour, if you will be
Your pupil's servant, bear this casket hence.
Nay, not the necklace: it is hard to place.
Pray go before me; Iñez will be there.

(*Exit* JUAN *with the casket.*)

FEDALMA (*looking again at the necklace*).

It is *his* past clings to you, not my own.
If we have each our angels, good and bad,
Fates, separate from ourselves, who act for us
When we are blind, or sleep, then this man's fate,
Hovering about the thing he used to wear,
Has laid its grasp on mine appealingly.
Dangerous, is he?—well, a Spanish knight
Would have his enemy strong—defy, not bind him.
I can dare all things when my soul is moved
By something hidden that possesses me.
If Silva said this man must keep his chains
I should find ways to free him—disobey
And free him as I did the birds. But no!
As soon as we are wed, I'll put my prayer,
And he will not deny me: he is good.
Oh, I shall have much power as well as joy!
Duchess Fedalma may do what she will.

A Street by the Castle. JUAN *leans against a parapet, in moonlight, and touches his lute half unconsciously.* PEPÍTA *stands on tiptoe watching him, and then advances till her shadow falls in front of him. He looks toward her. A piece of white drapery thrown over her head catches the moonlight.*

JUAN.

Ha! my Pepíta! see how thin and long
Your shadow is. 'Tis so your ghost will be,
When you are dead.

PEPÍTA (*crossing herself*).

Dead!—O the blessed saints!
You would be glad, then, if Pepíta died?

JUAN.

Glad! why? Dead maidens are not merry. Ghosts
Are doleful company. I like you living.

PEPÍTA.

I think you like me not. I wish you did.
Sometimes you sing to me and make me dance,
Another time you take no heed of me,
Not though I kiss my hand to you and smile.
But Andrès would be glad if I kissed *him.*

JUAN.

My poor Pepíta, I am old.

PEPÍTA.

No, no.
You have no wrinkles.

JUAN.

Yes, I have—within;
The wrinkles are within, my little bird.
Why, I have lived through twice a thousand years,
And kept the company of men whose bones
Crumbled before the blessed Virgin lived.

PEPÍTA (*crossing herself*).

Nay, God defend us, that is wicked talk!
You say it but to scorn me. (*With a sob*) I will go.

JUAN.

Stay, little pigeon, I am not unkind.
Come, sit upon the wall. Nay, never cry.
Give me your cheek to kiss. There, cry no more!

(PEPÍTA, *sitting on the low parapet, puts up her cheek to* JUAN, *who kisses it, putting his hand under her chin. She takes his hand and kisses it.*)

PEPÍTA.

I like to kiss your hand. It is so good—
So smooth and soft.

JUAN.

Well, well, I'll sing to you.

PEPÍTA.

A pretty song, loving and merry?

JUAN.

Yes.

JUAN (*sings*).

Memory,
Tell to me
What is fair,
Past compare,
In the land of Tubal?

Is it Spring's
Lovely things,
Blossoms white,
Rosy dight?
Then it is Pepita.

Summer's crest
Red-gold tressed,

Corn-flowers peeping under!—
Idle noons,
Lingering moons,
Sudden cloud,
Lightning's shroud,
Sudden rain,
Quick again
Smiles where late was thunder?—
Are all these
Made to please?
So too is Pepita.

Autumn's prime,
Apple-time,
Smooth cheek round,
Heart all sound?—
Is it this
You would kiss?
Then it is Pepita.

You can bring
No sweet thing,
But my mind
Still shall find
It is my Pepita.

Memory
Says to me
It is she—
She is fair
Past compare
In the land of Tubal.

PEPITA (*seizing* JUAN'S *hand again*).

Oh, then, you do love me?

JUAN.

Yes, in the song.

PEPITA (*sadly*).

Not out of it?—not love me out of it?

JUAN.

Only a little out of it my bird.
When I was singing I was Andrès, say,
Or one who loves you better still than he.

PEPÍTA.

Not yourself?

JUAN.

No!

PEPÍTA (*throwing his hand down pettishly*).

Then take it back again!
I will not have it!

JUAN.

Listen, little one.
Juan is not a living man by himself;
His life is breathed in him by other men,
And they speak out of him. He is their voice
Juan's own life he gave once quite away.
Pepíta's lover sang that song—not Juan.
We old, old poets, if we kept our hearts,
Should hardly know them from another man's.
They shrink to make room for the many more
We keep within us. There, now—one more kiss,
And then go home again.

PEPÍTA (*a little frightened after letting* JUAN *kiss her*).

You are not wicked?

JUAN.

Ask your confessor—tell him what I said.

(PEPITA *goes while* JUAN *thrums his lute again, and sings.*)

Came a pretty maid
By the moon's pure light,
Loved me well, she said,
Eyes with tears all bright,
A pretty maid!

But too late she strayed,
Moonlight pure was there;
She was naught but shade
Hiding the more fair,
The heavenly maid!

A vaulted room all stone. The light shed from a high lamp. Wooden chairs, a desk, book-shelves. The PRIOR *in white frock, a black rosary with a crucifix of ebony and ivory at his side, is walking up and down, holding a written paper in his hands, which are clasped behind him.*

What if this witness lies? he says he heard her
Counting her blasphemies on a rosary,
And in a bold discourse with Salomo,
Say that the Host was naught but ill-mixed flour,
That it was mean to pray—she never prayed.
I know the man who wrote this for a cur,
Who follows Don Diego, sees life's good
In scraps my nephew flings to him. What then?
Particular lies may speak a general truth.
I guess him false, but know her heretic—
Know her for Satan's instrument, bedecked
With heathenish charms, luring the souls of men
To damning trust in good unsanctified.
Let her be prisoned—questioned—she will give
Witness against herself, that were this false——

(*He looks at the paper again and reads, then again thrusts it behind him.*)

The matter and the color are not false:
The form concerns the witness, not the judge;
For proof is gathered by the sifting mind,
Not given in crude and formal circumstance.
Suspicion is a heaven-sent lamp, and I—
I watchman of the Holy Office, bear
That lamp in trust. I will keep faithful watch.
The Holy Inquisition's discipline
Is mercy, saving her, if penitent—
God grant it!—else—root up the poison-plant,
Though 'twere a lily with a golden heart!
This spotless maiden with her pagan soul
Is the arch-enemy's trap: he turns his back

On all the prostitutes, and watches her
To see her poison men with false belief
In rebel virtues. She has poisoned Silva;
His shifting mind, dangerous in fitfulness,
Strong in the contradiction of itself,
Carries his young ambitions wearily,
As holy vows regretted. Once he seemed
The fresh-oped flower of Christian knighthood, born
For feats of holy daring; and I said:
"That half of life which I, as monk, renounce,
Shall be fulfilled in him: Silva will be
That saintly noble, that wise warrior,
That blameless excellence in worldly gifts
I would have been, had I not asked to live
The higher life of man impersonal
Who reigns o'er all things by refusing all."
What is his promise now? Apostasy
From every high intent:—languid, nay, gone,
The prompt devoutness of a generous heart,
The strong obedience of a reverent will,
That breathes the Church's air and sees her light,
He peers and strains with feeble questioning,
Or else he jests. He thinks I know it not—
I who have read the history of his lapse,
As clear as it is writ in the angel's book.
He will defy me—flings great words at me—
Me who have governed all our house's acts,
Since I, a stripling, ruled his stripling father.
This maiden is the cause, and if they wed,
The Holy War may count a captain lost.
For better he were dead than keep his place,
And fill it infamously: in God's war
Slackness is infamy. Shall I stand by
And let the tempter win? defraud Christ's cause,
And blot his banner?—all for scruples weak
Of pity toward their young and frolicsome blood;
Or nice discrimination of the tool
By which my hand shall work a sacred rescue?
The fence of rules is for the purblind crowd;
They walk by averaged precepts: sovereign men,
Seeing by God's light, see the general
By seeing all the special—own no rule
But their full vision of the moment's worth.
'Tis so God governs, using wicked men—
Nay, scheming fiends, to work his purposes.

Evil that good may come? Measure the good
Before you say what's evil. Perjury?
I scorn the perjurer, but I will use him
To serve the holy truth. There is no lie
Save in his soul, and let his soul be judged.
I know the truth, and act upon the truth.

O God, thou knowest that my will is pure.
Thy servant owns naught for himself, his wealth
Is but obedience. And I have sinned
In keeping small respects of human love—
Calling it mercy. Mercy? Where evil is
True mercy holds a sword. Mercy would save.
Save whom? Save serpents, locusts, wolves?
Or out of pity let the idiots gorge
Within a famished town? Or save the gains
Of men who trade in poison lest they starve?
Save all things mean and foul that clog the earth
Stifling the better? Save the fools who cling
For refuge round their hideous idol's limbs,
So leave the idol grinning unconsumed,
And save the fools to breed idolaters?
O mercy worthy of the licking hound
That knows no future but its feeding time!
Mercy has eyes that pierce the ages—sees
From heights divine of the eternal purpose
Far-scattered consequence in its vast sum;
Chooses to save, but with illumined vision
Sees that to save is greatly to destroy.
'Tis so the Holy Inquisition sees: its wrath
Is fed from the strong heart of wisest love.
For love must needs make hatred. He who loves
God and his law must hate the foes of God.
And I have sinned in being merciful:
Being slack in hate, I have been slack in love.

(*He takes the crucifix and holds it up before him.*)

Thou shuddering, bleeding, thirsting, dying God,
Thou man of Sorrows, scourged and bruised and torn,
Suffering to save—wilt thou not judge the world?
This arm which held the children, this pale hand
That gently touched the eyelids of the blind,
And opened passive to the cruel nail,
Shall one day stretch to leftward of thy throne,

Charged with the power that makes the lightning
strong,
And hurl thy foes to everlasting hell.
And thou, Immaculate Mother, Virgin mild,
Thou sevenfold-pierced, thou pitying, pleading Queen,
Shalt see and smile, while the black filthy souls
Sink with foul weight to their eternal place,
Purging the Holy Light. Yea, I have sinned
And called it mercy. But I shrink no more.
To-morrow morn this temptress shall be safe
Under the Holy Inquisition's key.
He thinks to wed her, and defy me then,
She being shielded by our house's name.
But he shall never wed her. I have said.

The time is come. *Exurge, Domine,*
Judica causam tuam. Let thy foes
Be driven as the smoke before the wind,
And melt like wax upon the furnace lip!

A large chamber richly furnished opening on a terrace-garden, the trees visible through the window in faint moonlight. Flowers hanging about the window, lit up by the tapers. The casket of jewels open on a table. The gold necklace lying near. FEDALMA, *splendidly dressed and adorned with pearls and rubies, is walking up and down.*

So soft a night was never made for sleep,
But for the waking of the finer sense
To every murmuring and gentle sound,
To subtlest odors, pulses, visitings
That touch our frames with wings too delicate
To be discerned amid the glare of day.

(*She pauses near the window to gather some jasmine: then walks again.*)

Surely these flowers keep happy watch—their breath
Is their fond memory of the loving light.
I often rue the hours I lose in sleep:
It is a bliss too brief, only to see
This glorious world, to hear the voice of love,
To feel the touch, the breath of tenderness,
And then to rest as from a spectacle.
I need the curtained stillness of the night

To live through all my happy hours again
With more selection—cull them quite away
From blemished moments. Then in loneliness
The face that bent before me in the day
Rises in its own light, more vivid seems
Painted upon the dark, and ceaseless glows
With sweet solemnity of gazing love,
Till like the heavenly blue it seems to grow
Nearer, more kindred, and more cherishing,
Mingling with all my being. Then the words,
The tender low-toned words come back again,
With repetition welcome as the chime
Of softly hurrying brooks—"My only love—
My love while life shall last—my own Fedalma!"
Oh, it is mine—the joy that once has been!
Poor eager hope is but a stammerer,
Must listen dumbly to great memory,
Who makes our bliss the sweeter by her telling.

(*She pauses a moment musingly.*)

But that dumb hope is still a sleeping guard
Whose quiet rhythmic breath saves me from dread
In this fair paradise. For if the earth
Broke off with flower-fringed edge, visibly sheer,
Leaving no footing for my forward step
But empty blackness——
Nay, there is no fear—
They will renew themselves, day and my joy,
And all that past which is securely mine,
Will be the hidden root that nourishes
Our still unfolding, ever-ripening love!

(*While she is uttering the last words, a little bird falls softly on the floor behind her; she hears the light sound of its fall and turns round.*)

Did something enter?——
Yes, this little bird——

(*She lifts it.*)

Dead and yet warm; 'twas seeking sanctuary,
And died, perhaps of fright, at the altar foot.
Stay, there is something tied beneath the wing!
A strip of linen, streaked with blood—what blood?

The streaks are written words—are sent to me—
O God, are sent to me! *Dear child, Fedalma,*
Be brave, give no alarm—your Father comes!

(*She lets the bird fall again.*)

My Father——comes——my Father——

(*She turns in quivering expectation toward the window. There is perfect stillness a few moments until* ZARCA *appears at the window. He enters quickly and noiselessly; then stands still at his full height, and at a distance from* FEDALMA.)

FEDALMA (*in a low distinct tone of terror*).

It is he!
I said his fate had laid its hold on mine.

ZARCA (*advancing a step or two*).

You know, then, who I am?

FEDALMA.

The prisoner—
He whom I saw in fetters—and this necklace——

ZARCA.

Was played with by your fingers when it hung
About my neck, full fifteen years ago.

FEDALMA (*looking at the necklace and handling it, then speaking, as if unconsciously*).

Full fifteen years ago!

ZARCA.

The very day
I lost you, when you wore a tiny gown
Of scarlet cloth with golden broidery:
'Twas clasped in front by coins—two golden coins.
The one upon the left was split in two
Across the king's head, right from brow to nape,
A dent i' the middle nicking in the cheek.
You see I know the little gown by heart,

FEDALMA (*growing paler and more tremulous*).

Yes. It is true—I have the gown—the clasps—
The braid—sore tarnished:—it is long ago!

ZARCA.

But yesterday to me; for till to-day
I saw you always as that little child.
And when they took my necklace from me, still
Your fingers played about it on my neck,
And still those buds of fingers on your feet
Caught in its meshes as you seemed to climb
Up to my shoulder. You were not stolen all.
You had a double life fed from my heart——

(FEDALMA, *letting fall the necklace, makes an impulsive movement toward him, with outstretched hands.*)

The Gypsy father loves his children well.

FEDALMA (*shrinking, trembling, and letting fall her hands*).

How came it that you sought me—no—I mean
How came it that you knew me—that you lost me?

ZARCA (*standing perfectly still*).

Poor child! I see—your father and his rags
Are welcome as the piercing wintry wind
Within this silken chamber. It is well.
I would not have a child who stooped to feign,
And aped a sudden love. Better, true hate.

FEDALMA (*raising her eyes toward him, with a flash of admiration, and looking at him fixedly*).

Father, how was it that we lost each other?

ZARCA.

I lost you as a man may lose a gem
Wherein he has compressed his total wealth,
Or the right hand whose cunning makes him great:
I lost you by a trivial accident.
Marauding Spaniards, sweeping like a storm
Over a spot within the Moorish bounds,
Near where our camp lay, doubtless snatched you up,
When Zind, your nurse, as she confessed, was urged

By burning thirst to wander toward the stream,
And leave you on the sand some paces off
Playing with pebbles, while she dog-like lapped.
'Twas so I lost you—never saw you more
Until to-day I saw you dancing! Saw
The daughter of the Zíncala make sport
For those who spit upon her people's name.

FEDALMA (*vehemently*).

It was not sport. What if the world looked on?—
I danced for joy—for love of all the world.
But when you looked at me my joy was stabbed—
Stabbed with your pain. I wondered——now I know——
It was my father's pain.

(*She pauses a moment with eyes bent downward, during which* ZARCA *examines her face. Then she says quickly,*)

How were you sure
At once I was your child?

ZARCA.

I had witness strong
As any Cadi needs, before I saw you!
I fitted all my memories with the chat
Of one named Juan—one whose rapid talk
Showers like the blossoms from a light-twigged shrub,
If you but cough beside it. I learned all
The story of your Spanish nurture—all
The promise of your fortune. When at last
I fronted you, my little maid full-grown,
Belief was turned to vision: then I saw
That she whom Spaniards called the bright Fedalma—
The little red-frocked foundling three years old—
Grown to such perfectness the Spanish Duke
Had wooed her for his Duchess—was the child,
Sole offspring of my flesh, that Lambra bore
One hour before the Christian, hunting us,
Hurried her on to death. Therefore I sought—
Therefore I come to claim you—claim my child,
Not from the Spaniard, not from him who robbed,
But from herself.

(FEDALMA *has gradually approached close to* ZARCA, *and with a low sob sinks on her knees before him. He stoops to kiss her brow, and lays his hands on her head.*)

ZARCA (*with solemn tenderness*).

Then my child owns her father?

FEDALMA.

Father! yes.
I will eat dust before I will deny
The flesh I spring from.

ZARCA.

There my daughter spoke.
Away then with these rubies!

(*He seizes the circlet of rubies and flings it on the ground.* FEDALMA, *starting from the ground with strong emotion, shrinks backward.*)

Such a crown
Is infamy around a Zíncala's brow.
It is her people's blood, decking her shame.

FEDALMA (*after a moment, slowly and distinctly, as if accepting a doom*).

Then——I was born——a Zíncala?

ZARCA.

Of a blood
Unmixed as virgin wine-juice.

FEDALMA.

Of a race
More outcast and despised than Moor or Jew?

ZARCA.

Yes: wanderers whom no God took knowledge of
To give them laws, to fight for them, or blight
Another race to make them ampler room;

Who have no Whence or Whither in their souls,
No dimmest lore of glorious ancestors
To make a common hearth for piety.

FEDALMA.

A race that lives on prey as foxes do
With stealthy, petty rapine: so despised,
It is not persecuted, only spurned,
Crushed underfoot, warred on by chance like rats,
Or swarming flies, or reptiles of the sea
Dragged in the net unsought, and flung far off
To perish as they may?

ZARCA.

You paint us well.
So abject are the men whose blood we share:
Untutored, unbefriended, unendowed;
No favorites of heaven or of men.
Therefore I cling to them! Therefore no lure
Shall draw me to disown them, or forsake
The meagre wandering herd that lows for help
And needs me for its guide, to seek my pasture
Among the well-fed beeves that graze at will.
Because our race has no great memories,
I will so live, it shall remember me
For deeds of such divine beneficence
As rivers have, that teach men what is good
By blessing them. I have been schooled—have caught
Lore from the Hebrew, deftness from the Moor—
Know the rich heritage, the milder life,
Of nations fathered by a mighty Past;
But were our race accursed (as they who make
Good luck a god count all unlucky men)
I would espouse their curse sooner than take
My gifts from brethren naked of all good,
And lend them to the rich for usury.

(FEDALMA *again advances, and putting forth her right hand grasps* ZARCA'S *left. He places his other hand on her shoulder. They stand so, looking at each other.*)

ZARCA.

And you, my child? are you of other mind,
Choosing forgetfulness, hating the truth

That says you are akin to needy men?—
Wishing your father were some Christian Duke,
Who could hang Gypsies when their task was done,
While you, his daughter, were not bound to care?

FEDALMA (*in a troubled eager voice*).

No, I should always care—I cared for you—
For all, before I dreamed ——

ZARCA.

Before you dreamed
That you were born a Zíncala—your flesh
Stamped with your people's faith.

FEDALMA (*bitterly*).

The Gypsies' faith?
Men say they have none.

ZARCA.

Oh, it is a faith
Taught by no priest, but by their beating hearts;
Faith to each other; the fidelity
Of fellow wanderers in a desert place
Who share the same dire thirst, and therefore share
The scanty water; the fidelity
Of men whose pulses leap with kindred fire,
Who in the flash of eyes, the clasp of hands,
The speech that even in lying tells the truth
Of heritage inevitable as birth,
Nay, in the silent bodily presence feel
The mystic stirring of a common life
Which makes the many one; fidelity
To the consecrating oath our sponsor Fate
Made through our infant breath when we were born
The fellow-heirs of that small island, Life,
Where we must dig and sow and reap with brothers.
Fear thou that oath, my daughter—nay, not fear,
But love it; for the sanctity of oaths
Lies not in lightning that avenges them,
But in the injury wrought by broken bonds
And in the garnered good of human trust.
And you have sworn—even with your infant breath
You too were pledged——

FEDALMA (*letting go* ZARCA'S *hand, and sinking backward on her knees, with bent head, as if before some impending crushing weight*).

To what? what have I sworn?

ZARCA.

To take the heirship of the Gypsy's child;
The child of him who, being chief, will be
The savior of his tribe, or if he fail
Will choose to fail rather than basely win
The prize of renegades. Nay will not choose—
Is there a choice for strong souls to be weak?
For men erect to crawl like hissing snakes?
I choose not—I *am* Zarca. Let him choose
Who halts and wavers, having appetite
To feed on garbage. You, my child—are you
Halting and wavering?

FEDALMA (*raising her head*).

Say what is my task.

ZARCA.

To be the angel of a homeless tribe;
To help me bless a race taught by no prophet
And make their name, now but a badge of scorn,
A glorious banner floating in their midst,
Stirring the air they breathe with impulses
Of generous pride, exalting fellowship
Until it soars to magnanimity.
I'll guide my brethren forth to their new land,
Where they shall plant and sow and reap their own,
Serving each other's needs, and so be spurred
To skill in all the arts that succor life;
Where we may kindle our first altar-fire
From settled hearths, and call our Holy Place
The hearth that binds us in one family.
That land awaits them; they await their chief—
Me who am prisoned. All depends on you.

FEDALMA (*rising to her full height and looking solemnly at* ZARCA).

Father, your child is ready! She will not
Forsake her kindred; she will brave all scorn

Sooner than scorn herself. Let Spaniards all,
Christians, Jews, Moors, shoot out the lip and say,
"Lo, the first hero in a tribe of thieves."
Is it not written so of them? They, too,
Were slaves, lost, wandering, sunk beneath a curse,
Till Moses, Christ and Mahomet were born,
Till beings lonely in their greatness lived,
And lived to save their people. Father, listen.
The Duke to-morrow weds me secretly;
But straight he will present me as his wife
To all his household, cavaliers and dames
And noble pages. Then I will declare
Before them all, "I am his daughter, his,
The Gypsy's, owner of this golden badge."
Then I shall win your freedom; then the Duke—
Why, he will be your son!—will send you forth
With aid and honors. Then, before all eyes
I'll clasp this badge on you, and lift my brow
For you to kiss it, saying by that sign,
'I glory in my father.'" This, to-morrow.

ZARCA.

A woman's dream—who thinks by smiling well
To ripen figs in frost. What! marry first,
And then proclaim your birth? Enslave yourself
To use your freedom? Share another's name,
Then treat it as you will? How will that tune
Ring in your bridegroom's ears—that sudden song
Of triumph in your Gypsy father?

FEDALMA (*discouraged*).

Nay,
I meant not so. We marry hastily—
Yet there is time—there will be:—in less space
Than he can take to look at me, I'll speak
And tell him all. Oh, I am not afraid!
His love for me is stronger than all hate;
Nay, stronger than my love, which cannot sway
Demons that haunt me—tempt me to rebel.
Were he Fedalma and I Silva, he
Could love confession, prayers, and tonsured monks
If my soul craved them. He will never hate
The race that bore him what he loves the most.
I shall but do more strongly what I will,

Having his will to help me. And to-morrow,
Father, as surely as this heart shall beat,
You—every Gypsy chained, shall be set free.

ZARCA (*coming nearer to her and laying his hand on her shoulder*).

Too late, too poor a service that, my child!
Not so the woman who would save her tribe
Must help its heroes—not by wordy breath,
By easy prayers strong in a lover's ear,
By showering wreaths and sweets and wafted kisses,
And then, when all the smiling work is done,
Turning to rest upon her down again,
And whisper languid pity for her race
Upon the bosom of her alien spouse.
Not to such petty mercies as can fall
'Twixt stitch and stitch of silken broidery,
Such miracles of mitred saints who pause
Beneath their gilded canopy to heal
A man sun-stricken: not to such trim merit
As soils its dainty shoes for charity
And simpers meekly at the pious stain,
But never trod with naked bleeding feet
Where no man praised it, and where no Church blessed:
Not to such almsdeeds fit for holidays
Were you, my daughter, consecrated—bound
By laws that, breaking, you will dip your bread
In murdered brother's blood and call it sweet—
When you were born beneath the dark man's tent,
And lifted up in sight of all your tribe,
Who greeted you with shouts of loyal joy,
Sole offspring of the chief in whom they trust
As in the oft-tried never-failing flint
They strike their fire from. Other work is yours.

FEDALMA.

What work?—what is it that you ask of me?

ZARCA.

A work as pregnant as the act of men
Who set their ships aflame and spring to land,
A fatal deed ——

FEDALMA.

Stay! never utter it!
If it can part my lot from his whose love
Has chosen me. Talk not of oaths, of birth,
Of men as numerous as the dim white stars—
As cold and distant, too, for my heart's pulse.
No ills on earth, though you should count them up
With grains to make a mountain, can outweigh
For me, his ill who is my supreme love.
All sorrows else are but imagined flames,
Making me shudder at an unfelt smart;
But his imagined sorrow is a fire
That scorches me.

ZARCA.

I know, I know it well—
The first young passionate wail of spirits called
To some great destiny. In vain, my daughter!
Lay the young eagle in what nest you will,
The cry and swoop of eagles overhead
Vibrate prophetic in its kindred frame,
And make it spread its wings and poise itself
For the eagle's flight. Hear what you have to do.

(FEDALMA *stands half averted, as if she dreaded the effect of his looks and words.*)

My comrades even now file off their chains
In a low turret by the battlements,
Where we were locked with slight and sleepy guard—
We who had files hid in our shaggy hair,
And possible ropes that waited but our will
In half our garments. Oh, the Moorish blood
Runs thick and warm to us, though thinned by chrism.
I found a friend am.. ng our gaolers—one
Who loves the Gypsy as the Moors ally.
I know the secrets of this fortress. Listen.
Hard by yon terrace is a narrow stair,
Cut in the living rock, and at one point
In its slow straggling course it branches off
Toward a low wooden door, that art has bossed
To such unevenness, it seems one piece
With the rough-hewn rock. Open that door, it leads
Through a broad passage burrowed under-ground
A good half mile out to the open plain:

Made for escape, in dire extremity
From siege or burning, of the house's wealth
In women or in gold. To find that door
Needs one who knows the number of the steps
Just to the turning-point; to open it,
Needs one who knows the secret of the bolt.
You have that secret: you will ope that door,
And fly with us.

FEDALMA (*receding a little, and gathering herself up in an attitude of resolve opposite to* ZARCA.)

No, I will never fly!
Never forsake that chief half of my soul
Where lies my love. I swear to set you free.
Ask for no more; it is not possible.
Father, my soul is not too base to ring
At touch of your great thoughts; nay, in my blood
There streams the sense unspeakable of kind,
As leopard feels at ease with leopard. But—
Look at these hands! You say when they were little
They played about the gold upon your neck.
I do believe it, for their tiny pulse
Made record of it in the inmost coil
Of growing memory. But see them now!
Oh, they have made fresh record; twined themselves
With other throbbing hands whose pulses feed
Not memories only but a blended life—
Life that will bleed to death if it be severed.
Have pity on me, father! Wait the morning;
Say you will wait the morning. I will win
Your freedom openly: you shall go forth
With aid and honors. Silva will deny
Naught to my asking——

ZARCA (*with contemptuous decision*).

Till you ask him aught
Wherein he is powerless. Soldiers even now
Murmur against him that he risks the town,
And forfeits all the prizes of a foray
To get his bridal pleasure with a bride
Too low for him. They'll murmur more and louder
If captives of our pith and sinew, fit
For all the work the Spaniard hates, are freed—
Now, too, when Spanish hands are scanty. What,

Turn Gypsies loose instead of hanging them!
'Tis flat against the edict. Nay, perchance
Murmurs aloud may turn to silent threats
Of some well-sharpened dagger; for your Duke
Has to his heir a pious cousin, who deems
The Cross were better served if he were Duke.
Such good you'll work your lover by your prayers.

FEDALMA.

Then, I will free you now! You shall be safe,
Nor he be blamed, save for his love to me.
I will declare what I have done: the deed
May put our marriage off——

ZARCA.

Ay, till the time
When you shall be a queen in Africa,
And he be prince enough to sue for you.
You cannot free us and come back to him.

FEDALMA.

And why?

ZARCA.

I would compel you to go forth.

FEDALMA.

You tell me that?

ZARCA.

Yes, for I'd have you choose;
Though, being of the blood you are—my blood—
You have no right to choose.

FEDALMA.

I only owe
A daughter's debt; I was not born a slave.

ZARCA.

No, not a slave; but you were born to reign.
'Tis a compulsion of a higher sort,
Whose fetters are the net invisible

That hold all life together. Royal deeds
May make long destinies for multitudes,
And you are called to do them. You belong
Not to the petty round of circumstance
That makes a woman's lot, but to your tribe,
Who trust in me and in my blood with trust
That men call blind; but it is only blind
As unyeaned reason is, that grows and stirs
Within the womb of superstition.

FEDALMA.

No!
I belong to him who loves me—whom I love—
Who chose me—whom I chose—to whom I pledged
A woman's truth. And that is nature too,
Issuing a fresher law than laws of birth.

ZARCA.

Unmake yourself, then, from a Zíncala—
Unmake yourself from being child of mine!
Take holy water, cross your dark skin white;
Round your proud eyes to foolish kitten looks;
Walk mincingly, and smirk, and twitch your robe:
Unmake yourself—doff all the eagle plumes
And be a parrot, chained to a ring that slips
Upon a Spaniard's thumb, at will of his
That you should prattle o'er his words again!
Get a small heart that flutters at the smiles
Of that plump penitent, that greedy saint
Who breaks all treaties in the name of God,
Saves souls by confiscation, sends to heaven
The altar fumes of burning heretics,
And chaffers with the Levite for the gold;
Holds Gypsies beasts unfit for sacrifice,
So sweeps them out like worms alive or dead.
Go, trail your gold and velvet in her court!—
A conscious Zíncala, smile at your rare luck,
While half your brethren——

FEDALMA.

I am not so vile!
It is not to such mockeries that I cling,
Not to the flaring tow of gala-lights;
It is to him—my love—the face of day.

ZARCA.

What, will you part him from the air he breathes,
Never inhale with him although you kiss him?
Will you adopt a soul without its thoughts,
Or grasp a life apart from flesh and blood?
Till then you cannot wed a Spanish Duke
And not wed shame at mention of your race,
And not wed hardness to their miseries—
Nay, not wed murder. Would you save my life
Yet stab my purpose? maim my every limb,
Put out my eyes, and turn me loose to feed?
Is that salvation? rather drink my blood.
That child of mine who weds my enemy—
Adores a God who took no heed of Gypsies—
Forsakes her people, leaves their poverty
To join the luckier crowd that mocks their woes—
That child of mine is doubly murderess,
Murdering her father's hope, her people's trust.
Such draughts are mingled in your cup of love!
And when you have become a thing so poor,
Your life is all a fashion without law
Save frail conjecture of a changing wish,
Your worshiped sun, your smiling face of day,
Will turn to cloudiness, and you will shiver
In your thin finery of vain desire.
Men call his passion madness; and he, too,
May learn to think it madness: 'tis a thought
Of ducal sanity.

FEDALMA.

No, he is true!
And if I part from him I part from joy.
Oh, it was morning with us—I seemed young.
But now I know I am an aged sorrow—
My people's sorrow. Father, since I am yours—
Since I must walk an unslain sacrifice,
Carrying the knife within me, quivering—
Put cords upon me, drag me to the doom
My birth has laid upon me. See, I kneel:
I cannot will to go.

ZARCA.

Will then to stay!
Say you will take your better painted such
By blind desire, and choose the hideous worse

For thousands who were happier but for you.
My thirty followers are assembled now
Without this terrace: I your father wait
That you may lead us forth to liberty—
Restore me to my tribe—five hundred men
Whom I alone can save, alone can rule,
And plant them as a mighty nation's seed.
Why, vagabonds who clustered round one man,
Their voice of God, their prophet and their king,
Twice grew to empire on the teeming shores
Of Africa, and sent new royalties
To feed afresh the Arab sway in Spain.
My vagabonds are a seed more generous,
Quick as the serpent, loving as the hound,
And beautiful as disinherited gods.
They have a promised land beyond the sea:
There I may lead them, raise my standard, call
The wandering Zíncali to that new home,
And make a nation—bring light, order, law,
Instead of chaos. You, my only heir,
Are called to reign for me when I am gone.
Now choose your deed: to save or to destroy.
You, a born Zíncala, you, fortunate
Above your fellows—you who hold a curse
Or blessing in the hollow of your hand—
Say you will loose that hand from fellowship,
Let go the rescuing rope, hurl all the tribes,
Children and countless beings yet to come,
Down from the upward path of light and joy,
Back to the dark and marshy wilderness
Where life is naught but blind tenacity
Of that which is. Say you will curse your race!

ZEDALMA (*rising and stretching out her arms in deprecation*).

No, no—I will not say it—I will go!
Father, I choose! I will not take a heaven
Haunted by shrieks of far-off misery.
This deed and I have ripened with the hours:
It is a part of me—a wakened thought
That, rising like a giant, masters me,
And grows into a doom. O mother life,
That seemed to nourish me so tenderly,
Even in the womb you vowed me to the fire,

Hung on my soul the burden of men's hopes,
And pledged me to redeem!—I'll pay the debt.
You gave me strength that I should pour it all
Into this anguish. I can never shrink
Back into bliss—my heart has grown too big
With things that might be. Father, I will go.
I will strip off these gems. Some happier bride
Shall wear them, since Fedalma would be dowered
With naught but curses, dowered with misery
Of men—of women, who have hearts to bleed
As hers is bleeding.

(*She sinks on a seat and begins to take off her jewels.*)

Now, good gems, we part.
Speak of me always tenderly to Silva.

(*She pauses, turning to* Zarca.)

O father, will the women of our tribe
Suffer as I do, in the years to come
When you have made them great in Africa?
Redeemed from ignorant ills only to feel
A conscious woe? Then—is it worth the pains?
Were it not better when we reach that shore
To raise a funeral-pile and perish all,
So closing up a myriad avenues
To misery yet unwrought? My soul is faint—
Will these sharp pangs buy any certain good?

Zarca.

Nay, never falter: no great deed is done
By falterers who ask for certainty.
No good is certain, but the steadfast mind,
The undivided will to seek the good:
'Tis that compels the elements, and wrings
A human music from the indifferent air.
The greatest gift the hero leaves his race
Is to have been a hero. Say we fail!—
We feed the high tradition of the world,
And leave our spirit in our children's breasts.

Fedalma (*unclasping her jeweled belt, and throwing it down*).

Yes, say that we shall fail! I will not count
On aught but being faithful. I will take

This yearning self of mine and strangle it.
I will not be half-hearted: never yet
Fedalma did aught with a wavering soul.
Die, my young joy—die, all my hungry hopes—
The milk you cry for from the breast of life
Is thick with curses. Oh, all fatness here
Snatches its meat from leanness—feeds on graves.
I will seek nothing but to shun base joy.
The saints were cowards who stood by to see
Christ crucified: they should have flung themselves
Upon the Roman spears, and died in vain—
The grandest death, to die in vain—for love
Greater than sways the forces of the world!
That death shall be my bridegroom. I will wed
The curse that blights my people. Father, come!

ZARCA.

No curse has fallen on us till we cease
To help each other. You, if you are false
To that first fellowship, lay on the curse.
But write now to the Spaniard: briefly say
That I, your father, came; that you obeyed
The fate which made you a Zíncala, as his fate
Made him a Spanish duke and Christian knight.
He must not think ——

FEDALMA.

Yes, I will write, but he—
Oh, he would know it—he would never think
The chain that dragged me from him could be aught
But scorching iron entering in my soul.

(*She writes.*)

Silva, sole love—he came—my father came.
I am the daughter of the Gypsy chief
Who means to be the Savior of our tribe.
He calls on me to live for his great end.
To live? nay, die for it. Fedalma dies
In leaving Silva: all that lives henceforth
Is the poor Zíncala.

(*She rises.*)

Father, now I go
To wed my people's lot.

ZARCA.

To wed a crown.
Our people's lowly lot we will make royal—
Give it a country, homes, and monuments
Held sacred through the lofty memories
That we shall leave behind us. Come, my Queen!

FEDALMA.

Stay, my betrothal ring!—one kiss—farewell!
O love, you were my crown. No other crown
Is aught but thorns on my poor woman's brow.

BOOK II.

SILVA was marching homeward while the moon
Still shed mild brightness like the far-off hope
Of those pale virgin lives that wait and pray.
The stars thin-scattered made the heavens large,
Bending in slow procession; in the east
Emergent from the dark waves of the hills,
Seeming a little sister of the moon,
Glowed Venus all unquenched. Silva, in haste,
Exultant and yet anxious, urged his troop
To quick and quicker march: he had delight
In forward stretching shadows, in the gleams
That traveled on the armor of the van,
And in the many-hoofed sound: in all that told
Of hurrying movement to o'ertake his thought
Already in Bedmár, close to Fedalma,
Leading her forth a wedded bride, fast vowed,
Defying Father Isidor. His glance
Took in with much content the priest who rode
Firm in his saddle, stalwart and broad-backed,
Crisp-curled, and comfortably secular,
Right in the front of him. But by degrees
Stealthily faint, disturbing with slow loss
That showed not yet full promise of a gain,
The light was changing, and the watch intense
Of moon and stars seemed weary, shivering:
The sharp white brightness passed from off the rocks
Carrying the shadows: beauteous Night lay dead

Under the pall of twilight, and the love-star
Sickened and shrank. The troop was winding now
Upward to where a pass between the peaks
Seemed like an opened gate—to Silva seemed
An outer gate of heaven, for through that pass
They entered his own valley, near Bedmár.
Sudden within the pass a horseman rose,
One instant dark upon the banner pale
Of rock-cut sky, the next in motion swift
With hat and plume high-shaken—ominous.
Silva had dreamed his future, and the dream
Held not this messenger. A minute more—
It was his friend Don Alvar whom he saw
Reining his horse up, face to face with him,
Sad as the twilight, all his clothes ill-girt—
As if he had been roused to see one die,
And brought the news to him whom death had robbed.
Silva believed he saw the worst—the town
Stormed by the infidel—or, could it be
Fedalma dragged?—no, there was not yet time.
But with a marble face, he only said,
"What evil, Alvar?"
"What this paper speaks."
It was Fedalma's letter folded close
And mute as yet for Silva. But his friend
Keeping it still sharp-pinched against his breast,
"It will smite hard, my lord: a private grief.
I would not have you pause to read it here.
Let us ride on—we use the moments best,
Reaching the town with speed. The smaller ill
Is that our Gypsy prisoners have escaped."
"No more. Give me the paper—nay, I know—
'Twill make no difference. Bid them march on faster."
Silva pushed forward—held the paper crushed
Close to his right. "They have imprisoned her,"
He said to Alvar in low, hard-cut tones,
Like a dream-speech of slumbering revenge.
"No—when they came to fetch her she was gone."
Swift as the right touch on a spring, that word
Made Silva read the letter. She was gone!
But not into locked darkness—only gone
Into free air—where he might find her yet.
The bitter loss had triumph in it—what!
They would have seized her with their holy claws
The Prior's sweet morsel of despotic hate

Was snatched from off his lips. This misery
Had yet a taste of joy.
But she was gone!
The sun had risen, and in the castle walls
The light grew strong and stronger. Silva walked
Through the long corridor where dimness yet
Cherished a lingering, flickering, dying hope:
Fedalma still was there—he could not see
The vacant place that once her presence filled.
Can we believe that the dear dead are gone?
Love in sad weeds forgets the funeral day,
Opens the chamber door and almost smiles—
Then sees the sunbeams pierce athwart the bed
Where the pale face is not. So Silva's joy,
Like the sweet habit of caressing hands
That seek the memory of another hand,
Still lived on fitfully in spite of words,
And, numbing thought with vague illusion, dulled
The slow and steadfast beat of certainty.
But in the rooms inexorable light
Streamed through the open window where she fled,
Streamed on the belt and coronet thrown down—
Mute witnesses—sought out the typic ring
That sparkled on the crimson, solitary,
Wounding him like a word. O hateful light!
It filled the chambers with her absence, glared
On all the motionless things her hand had touched,
Motionless all—save where old Iñez lay
Sunk on the floor holding her rosary,
Making its shadow tremble with her fear.
And Silva passed her by because she grieved:
It was the lute, the gems, the pictured heads,
He longed to crush, because they made no sign
But of insistence that she was not there,
She who had filled his sight and hidden them.
He went forth on the terrace tow'rd the stairs,
Saw the rained petals of the cistus flowers
Crushed by large feet; but on one shady spot
Far down the steps, where dampness made a home,
He saw a footprint delicate-slippered, small,
So dear to him, he searched for sister-prints,
Searched in the rock-hewn passage with a lamp
For other trace of her, and found a glove;
But not Fedalma's. It was Juan's glove,
Tasseled, perfumed, embroidered with his name,

A gift of dames. Then Juan, too, was gone?
Full-mouthed conjecture, hurrying through the town,
Had spread the tale already: it was he
That helped the Gypsies' flight. He talked and sang
Of nothing but the Gypsies and Fedalma.
He drew the threads together, wove the plan;
Had lingered out by moonlight, had been seen
Strolling, as was his wont, within the walls,
Humming his ditties. So Don Alvar told,
Conveying outside rumor. But the Duke,
Making of haughtiness a visor closed,
Would show no agitated front in quest
Of small disclosures. What her writing bore
Had been enough. He knew that she was gone,
Knew why.
"The Duke," some said, "will send a force,
Retake the prisoners, and bring back his bride."
But others, winking, "Nay, her wedding dress
Would be the *san-benito.* 'Tis a fight
Between the Duke and Prior. Wise bets will choose
The churchman: he's the iron, and the Duke——"
"Is a fine piece of pottery," said mine host,
Softening the sarcasm with a bland regret.

There was the thread that in the new-made knot
Of obstinate circumstance seemed hardest drawn,
Vexed most the sense of Silva, in these hours
Of fresh and angry pain—there, in that fight
Against a foe whose sword was magical,
His shield invisible terrors—against a foe
Who stood as if upon the smoking mount
Ordaining plagues. All else, Fedalma's flight,
The father's claim, her Gypsy birth disclosed,
Were momentary crosses, hindrances
A Spanish noble might despise. This Chief
Might still be treated with, would not refuse
A proffered ransom, which would better serve
Gypsy prosperity, give him more power
Over his tribe, than any fatherhood:
Nay, all the father in him must plead loud
For marriage of his daughter where she loved—
Her love being placed so high and lustrously.
The gypsy chieftain had foreseen a price
That would be paid him for his daughter's dower—
Might soon give signs. Oh, all his purpose lay

Face upward. Silva here felt strong, and smiled.
What could a Spanish noble not command?
He only helped the Queen, because he chose;
Could war on Spaniards, and could spare the Moor;
Buy justice, or defeat it—if he would:
Was loyal, not from weakness but from strength
Of high resolve to use his birthright well.
For nobles too are gods, like Emperors,
Accept perforce their own divinity,
And wonder at the virtue of their touch,
Till obstinate resistance shakes their creed,
Shattering that self whose wholeness is not rounded
Save in the plastic souls of other men.
Don Silva has been suckled in that creed
(A high-taught speculative noble else),
Held it absurd as foolish argument
If any failed in deference, was too proud
Not to be courteous to so poor a knave
As one who knew not necessary truths
Of birth and dues of rank; but cross his will,
The miracle-working will, his rage leaped out
As by a right divine to rage more fatal
Than a mere mortal man's. And now that will
Had met a stronger adversary—strong
As awful ghosts are whom we cannot touch,
While they clutch *us*, subtly as poisoned air,
In deep-laid fibres of inherited fear
That lie below all courage.

Silva said,

"She is not lost to me, might still be mine
But for the Inquisition—the dire hand
That waits to clutch her with a hideous grasp
Not passionate, human, living, but a grasp
As in the death-throe when the human soul
Departs and leaves force unrelenting, locked,
Not to be loosened save by slow decay
That frets the universe. Father Isidor
Has willed it so: his phial dropped the oil
To catch the air-borne motes of idle slander;
He fed the fascinated gaze that clung
Round all her movements, frank as growths of spring,
With the new hateful interest of suspicion.
What barrier is this Gypsy? a mere gate
I'll find the key for. The one barrier,
The tightening cord that winds about my limbs,

Is this kind uncle, this imperious saint,
He who will save me, guard me from myself.
And he can work his will: I have no help
Save reptile secrecy, and no revenge
Save that I *will* do what he schemes to hinder.
Ay, secrecy, and disobedience—these
No tyranny can master. Disobey!
You may divide the universe with God,
Keeping your will unbent, and hold a world
Where he is not supreme. The Prior shall know it!
His will shall breed resistance: he shall do
The thing he would not, further what he hates
By hardening my resolve."

But 'neath this speech—
Defiant, hectoring, the more passionate voice
Of many-blended consciousness—there breathed
Murmurs of doubt, the weakness of a self
That is not one; denies and yet believes;
Protests with passion, "This is natural"—
Yet owns the other still were truer, better,
Could nature follow it: a self disturbed
By budding growths of reason premature
That breed disease. With all his outflung rage
Silva half shrank before the steadfast man
Whose life was one compacted whole, a realm
Where the rule changed not, and the law was strong.
Then that reluctant homage stirred new hate,
And gave rebellion an intenser will.

But soon this inward strife the slow-paced hours
Slackened; and the soul sank with hunger-pangs,
Hunger of love. Debate was swept right down
By certainty of loss intolerable.
A little loss! only a dark-tressed maid
Who had no heritage save her beauteous being!
But in the candor of her virgin eyes
Saying, I love; and in the mystic charm
Of her dear presence, Silva found a heaven
Where faith and hope were drowned as stars in day.
Fedalma there, each momentary Now
Seemed a whole blest existence, a full cup
That, flowing over, asked no pouring hand
From past to future. All the world was hers.
Splendor was but the herald trumpet-note

Of her imperial coming; penury
Vanished before her as before a gem,
The pledge of treasuries. Fedalma there,
He thought all loveliness was lovelier,
She crowning it; all goodness credible,
Because of that great trust her goodness bred.
For the strong current of the passionate love
Which urged his life tow'rd hers, like urgent floods
That hurry through the various-mingled earth,
Carried within its stream all qualities
Of what it penetrated, and made love
Only another name, as Silva was,
For the whole man that breathed within his frame.
And she was gone. Well, goddesses will go;
But for a noble there were mortals left
Shaped just like goddesses—O hateful sweet!
O impudent pleasure that should dare to front
With vulgar visage memories divine!
The noble's birthright of miraculous will
Turning *I would* to *must be,* spurning all
Offered as substitute for what it chose,
Tightened and fixed in strain irrevocable
The passionate selection of that love
Which came not first but as all-conquering last.
Great Love has many attributes, and shrines
For varied worship, but his force divine
Shows most its many-named fullness in the man
Whose nature multitudinously mixed—
Each ardent impulse grappling with a thought—
Resists all easy gladness, all content
Save mystic rapture, where the questioning soul
Flooded with consciousness of good that is
Finds life one bounteous answer. So it was
In Silva's nature, Love had mastery there,
Not as a holiday ruler, but as one
Who quells a tumult in a day of dread,
A welcomed despot.

O all comforters,
All soothing things that bring mild ecstasy,
Came with her coming, in her presence lived.
Spring afternoons, when delicate shadows fall
Penciled upon the grass; high summer morns
When white light rains upon the quiet sea
And corn-fields flush with ripeness; odors soft—
Dumb vagrant bliss that seems to seek a home

And find it deep within, 'mid stirrings vague
Of far-off moments when our life was fresh;
All sweetly-tempered music, gentle change
Of sound, form, color, as on wide lagoons
At sunset when from black far-floating prows
Comes a clear wafted song; all exquisite joy
Of a subdued desire, like some strong stream
Made placid in the fullness of a lake—
All came with her sweet presence, for she brought
The love supreme which gathers to its realm
All powers of loving. Subtle nature's hand
Waked with a touch the far-linked harmonies
In her own manifold work. Fedalma there,
Fastidiousness became the prelude fine
For full contentment; and young melancholy,
Lost for its origin, seemed but the pain
Of waiting for that perfect happiness.
The happiness was gone!
He sat alone,
Hating companionship that was not hers;
Felt bruised with hopeless longing; drank, as wine,
Illusions of what had been, would have been;
Weary with anger and a strained resolve,
Sought passive happiness in waking dreams.
It has been so with rulers, emperors,
Nay, sages who held secrets of great Time,
Sharing his hoary and beneficent life—
Men who sat throned among the multitudes—
They have sore sickened at the loss of one.
Silva sat lonely in her chamber, leaned
Where she had leaned, to feel the evening breath
Shed from the orange trees; when suddenly
His grief was echoed in a sad young voice
Far and yet near, brought by aërial wings.

The world is great; the birds all fly from me,
The stars are golden fruit upon a tree
All out of reach; my little sister went,
And I am lonely.

The world is great; I tried to mount the hill
Above the pines, where the light lies so still,
But it rose higher; little Lisa went,
And I am lonely.

The world is great; the wind comes rushing by,
I wonder where it comes from; sea-birds cry
And hurt my heart; my little sister went,
And I am lonely.

The world is great; the people laugh and talk,
And make loud holiday; how fast they walk!
I'm lame, they push me; little Lisa went,
And I am lonely.

'Twas Pablo, like the wounded spirit of song
Pouring melodious pain to cheat the hour
For idle soldiers in the castle court.
Dreamily Silva heard and hardly felt
The song was outward, rather felt it part
Of his own aching, like the lingering day,
Or slow and mournful cadence of the bell.
But when the voice had ceased he longed for it,
And fretted at the pause, as memory frets
When words that made its body fall away
And leave it yearning dumbly. Silva then
Bethought him whence the voice came, framed perforce
Some outward image of a life not his
That made a sorrowful center to the world:
A boy lame, melancholy-eyed, who bore
A viol—yes, that very child he saw
This morning eating roots by the gateway—saw
As one fresh-ruined sees and spells a name
And knows not what he does, yet finds it writ
Full in the inner record. Hark, again!
The voice and viol. Silva called his thought
To guide his ear and track the traveling sound.

O bird that used to press
Thy head against my cheek
With touch that seemed to speak
And ask a tender "yes"—
Ay de mi, my bird!

O tender downy breast
And warmly beating heart,
That beating seemed a part
Of me who gave it rest—
Ay de mi, my bird!

The western court! The singer might be seen
From the upper gallery: quick the Duke was there
Looking upon the court as on a stage.
Men eased of armor, stretched upon the ground,
Gambling by snatches; shepherds from the hills
Who brought their bleating friends for slaughter; grooms
Shouldering loose harness; leather-aproned smiths,
Traders with wares, green-suited serving-men,
Made a round audience; and in their midst
Stood little Pablo, pouring forth his song,
Just as the Duke had pictured. But the song
Was strangely 'companied by Roldan's play
With the swift gleaming balls, and now was crushed
By peals of laughter at grave Annibal,
Who carrying stick and purse o'erturned the pence,
Making mistake by rule. Silva had thought
To melt hard bitter grief by fellowship
With the world-sorrow trembling in his ear
In Pablo's voice; had meant to give command
For the boy's presence; but this company,
This mountebank and monkey, must be—stay!
Not be excepted—must be ordered too
Into his private presence; they had brought
Suggestion of a ready shapen tool
To cut a path between his helpless wish
And what it imaged. A ready shapen tool!
A spy, an envoy whom he might dispatch
In unsuspected secrecy, to find
The Gypsies' refuge so that none beside
Might learn it. And this juggler could be bribed,
Would have no fear of Moors—for who would kill
Dancers and monkeys?—could pretend a journey
Back to his home, leaving his boy the while
To please the Duke with song. Without such chance—
An envoy cheap and secret as a mole
Who could go scatheless, come back for his pay
And vanish straight, tied by no neighborhood—
Without such chance as this poor juggler brought,
Finding Fedalma was betraying her.

Short interval betwixt the thought and deed.
Roldan was called to private audience
With Annibal and Pablo. All the world
(By which I mean the score or two who heard)

Shrugged high their shoulders, and supposed the Duke
Would fain beguile the evening and replace
His lacking happiness, as was the right
Of nobles, who could pay for any cure,
And wore naught broken, save a broken limb.
In truth, at first, the Duke bade Pablo sing,
But, while he sang, called Roldan wide apart,
And told him of a mission secret, brief—
A quest which well performed might earn much gold,
But, if betrayed, another sort of pay.
Roldan was ready; "wished above all for gold
And never wished to speak; had worked enough
At wagging his old tongue and chiming jokes;
Thought it was others' turn to play the fool.
Give him but pence enough, no rabbit, sirs,
Would eat and stare and be more dumb than he.
Give him his orders."
They were given straight;
Gold for the journey and to buy a mule
Outside the gates through which he was to pass
Afoot and carelessly. The boy would stay
Within the castle, at the Duke's command,
And must have naught but ignorance to betray
For threats or coaxing. Once the quest performed,
The news delivered with some pledge of truth
Safe to the Duke, the juggler should go forth,
A fortune in his girdle, take his boy
And settle firm as any planted tree
In fair Valencia, never more to roam.
"Good! good! most worthy of a great hidalgo!
And Roldan was the man! But Annibal—
A monkey like no other, though morose
In private character, yet full of tricks—
'Twere hard to carry him, yet harder still
To leave the boy and him in company
And free to slip away. The boy was wild
And shy as mountain kid; once hid himself
And tried to run away; and Annibal,
Who always took the lad's side (he was small,
And they were nearer of a size, and, sirs,
Your monkey has a spite against us men
For being bigger)—Annibal went too.
Would hardly know himself, were he to lose
Both boy and monkey—and 'twas property,
The trouble he had put in Annibal.

He didn't choose another man should beat
His boy and monkey. If they ran away
Some man would snap them up, and square himself
And say they were his goods—he'd taught them—no!
He Roldan had no mind another man
Should fatten by his monkey, and the boy
Should not be kicked by any pair of sticks
Calling himself a juggler——"

But the Duke,
Tired of that hammering, signed that it should cease;
Bade Roldan quit all fears—the boy and ape
Should be safe lodged in Abderahman's tower,
In keeping of the great physician there,
The Duke's most special confidant and friend,
One skilled in taming brutes, and always kind.
The Duke himself this eve would see them lodged.
Roldan must go—spend no more words—but go.

The Astrologer's Study.

A room high up in Abderahman's tower,
A window open to the still warm eve,
And the bright disc of royal Jupiter.
Lamps burning low make little atmospheres
Of light amid the dimness; here and there
Show books and phials, stones and instruments.
In carved dark-oaken chair, unpillowed, sleeps
Right in the rays of Jupiter a small man,
In skull-cap bordered close with crisp gray curls,
And loose black gown showing a neck and breast
Protected by a dim-green amulet;
Pale-faced, with finest nostril wont to breathe
Ethereal passion in a world of thought;
Eye-brows jet-black and firm, yet delicate;
Beard scant and grizzled; mouth shut firm, with curves
So subtly turned to meanings exquisite,
You seem to read them as you read a word
Full-voweled, long-descended, pregnant—rich
With legacies from long, laborious lives.
Close by him, like a genius of sleep,
Purs the gray cat, bridling, with snowy breast.
A loud knock. "Forward!" in clear vocal ring.
Enter the Duke, Pablo, and Annibal
Exit the cat, retreating toward the dark.

DON SILVA.

You slept, Sephardo. I am come too soon.

SEPHARDO.

Nay, my lord, it was I who slept too long.
I go to court among the stars to-night,
So bathed my soul beforehand in deep sleep.
But who are these?

DON SILVA.

Small guests, for whom I ask
Your hospitality. Their owner comes
Some short time hence to claim them. I am pledged
To keep them safely; so I bring them you,
Trusting your friendship for small animals.

SEPHARDO.

Yea, am not I too a small animal?

DON SILVA.

I shall be much beholden to your love
If you will be their guardian. I can trust
No other man so well as you. The boy
Will please you with his singing, touches too
The viol wondrously.

SEPHARDO.

They are welcome both.
Their names are ——?

DON SILVA.

Pablo, this—this Annibal,
And yet, I hope, no warrior.

SEPHARDO.

We'll make peace.
Come, Pablo, let us loosen our friend's chain.
Deign you, my lord, to sit. Here Pablo, thou—
Close to my chair. Now Annibal shall choose.

[The cautious monkey, in a Moorish dress,
A tunic white, turban and scimiter.

Wears these stage garments, nay, his very flesh
With silent protest; keeps a neutral air
As aiming at a metaphysic state
'Twixt "is" and "is not"; lets his chain be loosed
By sage Sephardo's hands, sits still at first,
Then trembles out of his neutrality,
Looks up and leaps into Sephardo's lap,
And chatters forth his agitated soul,
Turning to peep at Pablo on the floor.]

SEPHARDO.

See, he declares we are at amity!

DON SILVA.

No brother sage had read your nature faster.

SEPHARDO.

Why, so he *is* a brother sage. Man thinks
Brutes have no wisdom, since they know not his:
Can we divine their world?—the hidden life
That mirrors us as hideous shapeless power,
Cruel supremacy of sharp-edged death,
Or fate that leaves a bleeding mother robbed?
Oh, they have long tradition and swift speech,
Can tell with touches and sharp darting cries
Whole histories of timid races taught
To breathe in terror by red-handed man.

DON SILVA.

Ah, you denounce my sport with hawk and hound.
I would not have the angel Gabriel
As hard as you in noting down my sins.

SEPHARDO.

Nay, they are virtues for you warriors—
Hawking and hunting! You are merciful
When you leave killing men to kill the brutes.
But, for the point of wisdom, I would choose
To know the mind that stirs between the wings
Of bees and building wasps, or fills the woods
With myriad murmurs of responsive sense
And true-aimed impulse, rather than to know
The thoughts of warriors.

DON SILVA.

Yet they are warriors too—
Your animals. Your judgment limps, Sephardo:
Death is the king of this world; 'tis his park
Where he breeds life to feed him. Cries of pain
Are music for his banquet; and the masque—
The last grand masque for his diversion, is
The Holy Inquisition.

SEPHARDO.

Ay, anon
I may chime in with you. But not the less
My judgment has firm feet. Though death were king,
And cruelty his right-hand minister,
Pity insurgent in some human breasts
Makes spiritual empire, reigns supreme
As persecuted faith in faithful hearts.
Your small physician, weighing ninety pounds,
A petty morsel for a healthy shark,
Will worship mercy throned within his soul
Though all the luminous angels of the stars
Burst into cruel chorus on his ear,
Singing, "We know no mercy." He would cry,
"I know it" still, and soothe the frightened bird
And feed the child a-hungered, walk abreast
Of persecuted men, and keep most hate
For rational torturers. There I stand firm.
But you are bitter, and my speech rolls on
Out of your note.

DON SILVA.

No, no, I follow you.
I too have that within which I will worship
In spite of ——. Yes, Sephardo, I am bitter.
I need your counsel, foresight, all your aid.
Lay these small guests to bed, then we will talk.

SEPHARDO.

See, they are sleeping now. The boy has made
My leg his pillow. For my brother sage,
He'll never heed us; he knit long ago
A sound ape-system, wherein men are brutes

Emitting doubtful noises. Pray, my lord,
Unlade what burdens you: my ear and hand
Are servants of a heart much bound to you.

DON SILVA.

Yes, yours is love that roots in gifts bestowed
By you on others, and will thrive the more
The more it gives. I have a double want:
First a confessor—not a Catholic;
A heart without a livery—naked manhood.

SEPHARDO.

My lord, I will be frank; there's no such thing
As naked manhood. If the stars look down
On any mortal of our shape, whose strength
Is to judge all things without preference,
He is a monster, not a faithful man.
While my heart beats, it shall wear livery—
My people's livery, whose yellow badge
Marks them for Christian scorn. I will not say
Man is first man to me, then Jew or Gentile:
That suits the rich *marranos;* but to me
My father is first father and then man.
So much for frankness' sake. But let that pass.
'Tis true at least, I am no Catholic
But Salomo Sephardo, a born Jew,
Willing to serve Don Silva.

DON SILVA.

Oft you sing
Another strain, and melt distinctions down
As no more real than the wall of dark
Seen by small fishes' eyes, that pierce a span
In the wide ocean. Now you league yourself
To hem me, hold me prisoner in bonds
Made, say you—how?—by God or Demiurge,
By spirit or flesh—I care not! Love was made
Stronger than bonds, and where they press must break them.
I came to you that I might breathe at large,
And now you stifle me with talk of birth,
Of race and livery. Yet you knew Fedalma.

She was your friend, Sephardo. And you know
She is gone from me—know the hounds are loosed
To dog me if I seek her.

SEPHARDO.

Yes, I know.
Forgive me that I used untimely speech,
Pressing a bruise. I loved her well, my lord:
A woman mixed of such fine elements
That were all virtue and religion dead
She'd make them newly, being what she was.

DON SILVA.

Was? say not *was*, Sephardo! She still lives—
Is, and is mine; and I will not renounce
What heaven, nay, what she gave me. I will sin,
If sin I must, to win my life again.
The fault lie with those powers who have embroiled
The world in hopeless conflict, where all truth
Fights manacled with falsehood, and all good
Makes but one palpitating life with ill.

(DON SILVA *pauses.* SEPHARDO *is silent.*)

Sephardo, speak! am I not justified?
You taught my mind to use the wing that soars
Above the petty fences of the herd:
Now, when I heed your doctrine, you are dumb.

SEPHARDO.

Patience! Hidalgos want interpreters
Of untold dreams and riddles; they insist
On dateless horoscopes, on formulas
To raise a possible spirit, nowhere named.
Science must be their wishing-cap; the stars
Speak plainer for high largesse. No, my lord!
I cannot counsel you to unknown deeds.
This much I can divine: you wish to find
Her whom you love—to make a secret search.

DON SILVA.

That is begun already: a messenger
Unknown to all has been dispatched this night.

But forecast must be used, a plan devised,
Ready for service when my scout returns,
Bringing the invisible thread to guide my steps
Toward that lost self my life is aching with.
Sephardo, I will go: and I must go
Unseen by all save you; though, at our need,
We may trust Alvar.

SEPHARDO.

A grave task, my lord.
Have you a shapen purpose, or mere will
That sees the end alone and not the means?
Resolve will melt no rocks.

DON SILVA.

But it can scale them.
This fortress has two private issues: one,
Which served the gypsies' flight to me is closed;
Our bands must watch the outlet, now betrayed
To cunning enemies. Remains one other,
Known to no man save me; a secret left
As heirloom in our house; a secret safe
Even from him—From Father Isidor.
'Tis he who forces me to use it—he;
All's virtue that cheats bloodhounds. Hear, Sephardo.
Given, my scout returns, and brings me news
I can straight act on, I shall want your aid.
The issue lies below this tower, your fastness,
Where, by my charter, you rule absolute.
I shall feign illness; you with mystic air
Must speak of treatment asking vigilance
(Nay I *am* ill—my life has half ebbed out).
I shall be whimsical, devolve command
On Don Diego, speak of poisoning,
Insist on being lodged within this tower,
And rid myself of tendance save from you
And perhaps from Alvar. So I shall escape
Unseen by spies, shall win the days I need
To ransom her and have her safe enshrined.
No matter, were my flight disclosed at last;
I shall come back as from a duel fought
Which no man can undo. Now you know all,
Say, can I count on you?

SEPHARDO.

For faithfulness
In aught that I may promise, yes, my lord.
But—for a pledge of faithfulness—this warning.
I will betray naught for your personal harm;
I love you. But note this—I am a Jew;
And while the Christian persecutes my race,
I'll turn at need even the Christian's trust
Into a weapon and a shield for Jews.
Shall Cruelty crowned—wielding the savage force
Of multitudes, and calling savageness God
Who gives it victory—upbraid deceit
And ask for faithfulness? I love you well.
You are my friend. But yet you are a Christian,
Whose birth has bound you to the Catholic kings.
There may come moments when to share my joy
Would make you traitor, when to share your grief
Would make me other than a Jew——

DON SILVA.

What need
To urge that now, Sephardo? I am one
Of many Spanish nobles who detest
The roaring bigotry of the herd, would fain
Dash from the lips of king and queen the cup
Filled with besotting venom, half infused
By avarice and half by priests. And now—
Now when the cruelty you flout me with
Pierces me too in the apple of my eye,
Now when my kinship scorches me like hate
Flashed from a mother's eye, you choose this time
To talk of birth as of inherited rage
Deep-down, volcanic, fatal, bursting forth
From under hard-taught reason? Wondrous friend!
My uncle Isidor's echo, mocking me,
From the opposing quarter of the heavens,
With iteration of the thing I know,
That I'm a Christian knight and Spanish duke!
The consequence? Why, that I know. It lies
In my own hands and not on raven tongues.
The knight and noble shall not wear the chain
Of false-linked thoughts in brains of other men.
What question was there 'twixt us two, of aught
That makes division? When I come to you
I come for other doctrine than the Prior's.

SEPHARDO.

My lord, you are o'erwrought by pain. My words,
That carried innocent meaning, do but float
Like little emptied cups upon the flood
Your mind brings with it. I but answered you
With regular proviso, such as stands
In testaments and charters, to forefend
A possible case which none deem likelihood;
Just turned my sleeve, and pointed to the brand
Of brotherhood that limits every pledge.
Superfluous nicety—the student's trick,
Who will not drink until he can define
What water is and is not. But enough.
My will to serve you now knows no division
Save the alternate beat of love and fear.
There's danger in this quest—name, honor, life—
My lord, the stake is great, and are you sure——

DON SILVA.

No, I am sure of naught but this, Sephardo,
That I will go. Prudence is but conceit
Hoodwinked by ignorance. There's naught exists
That is not dangerous and holds not death
For souls or bodies. Prudence turns its helm
To flee the storm and lands 'mid pestilence.
Wisdom would end by throwing dice with folly
But for dire passion which alone makes choice.
And I have chosen as the lion robbed
Chooses to turn upon the ravisher.
If love were slack, the Prior's imperious will
Would move it to outmatch him. But, Sephardo,
Were all else mute, all passive as sea-calms,
My soul is one great hunger—I must see her.
Now you are smiling. Oh, you merciful men
Pick up coarse griefs and fling them in the face
Of us whom life with long descent has trained
To subtler pains, mocking your ready balms.
You smile at my soul's hunger.

SEPHARDO.

Science smiles
And sways our lips in spite of us, my lord,
When thought weds fact—when maiden prophecy
Waiting, believing, sees the bridal torch.

I use not vulgar measures for your grief,
My pity keeps no cruel feasts; but thought
Has joys apart, even in blackest woe,
And seizing some fine thread of verity
Knows momentary godhead.

DON SILVA.

And your thought?

SEPHARDO.

Seized on the close agreement of your words
With what is written in your horoscope.

DON SILVA.

Reach it me now.

SEPHARDO.

By your leave, Annibal.

(*He places* ANNIBAL *on* PABLO'S *lap and rises. The boy moves without waking, and his head falls on the opposite side.* SEPHARDO *fetches a cushion and lays* PABLO'S *head gently down upon it, then goes to reach the parchment from a cabinet.* ANNIBAL, *having waked up in alarm, shuts his eyes quickly again and pretends to sleep.*)

DON SILVA.

I wish, by new appliance of your skill,
Reading afresh the records of the sky,
You could detect more special augury.
Such chance oft happens, for all characters
Must shrink or widen, as our wine-skins do,
For more or less that we can pour in them;
And added years give ever a new key
To fixed prediction.

SEPHARDO (*returning with the parchment and reseating himself*).

True; our growing thought
Makes growing revelation. But demand not

Specific augury, as of sure success
In meditated projects, or of ends
To be foreknown by peeping in God's scroll.
I say—nay, Ptolemy said it, but wise books
For half the truths they hold are honored tombs—
Prediction is contingent, of effects
Where causes and concomitants are mixed
To seeming wealth of possibilities
Beyond our reckoning. Who will pretend
To tell the adventures of each single fish
Within the Syrian Sea? Show me a fish,
I'll weigh him, tell his kind, what he devoured,
What would have devoured *him*—but for one Blas
Who netted him instead; nay, could I tell
That had Blas missed him, he would not have died
Of poisonous mud, and so made carrion,
Swept off at last by some sea-scavenger?

DON SILVA.

Ay, now you talk of fishes, you get hard.
I note you merciful men: you can endure
Torture of fishes and hidalgos. Follows?

SEPHARDO.

By how much, then, the fortunes of a man
Are made of elements refined and mixed
Beyond a tunny's, what our science tells
Of the star's influence hath contingency
In special issues. Thus, the loadstone draws,
Acts like a will to make the iron submiss;
But garlick rubbing it, that chief effect
Lies in suspense; the iron keeps at large,
And garlick is controller of the stone.
And so, my lord, your horoscope declares
Not absolutely of your sequent lot,
But, by our lore's authentic rules, sets forth
What gifts, what dispositions, likelihoods
The aspect of the heavens conspired to fuse
With your incorporate soul. Aught more than this
Is vulgar doctrine. For the ambient,
Though a cause regnant, is not absolute,
But suffers a determining restraint
From action of the subject qualities
In proximate motion.

DON SILVA.

Yet you smiled just now
At some close fitting of my horoscope
With present fact—with this resolve of mine
To quit the fortress?

SEPHARDO.

Nay, not so; I smiled,
Observing how the temper of your soul
Sealed long tradition of the influence shed
By the heavenly spheres. Here is your horoscope:
The aspects of the Moon with Mars conjunct,
Of Venus and the Sun with Saturn, lord
Of the ascendant make symbolic speech
Whereto your words gave running paraphrase.

DON SILVA (*impatiently*).

What did I say?

SEPHARDO.

You spoke as oft you did
When I was schooling you at Córdova,
And lessons on the noun and verb were drowned
With sudden stream of general debate
On things and actions. Always in that stream
I saw the play of babbling currents, saw
A nature o'er-endowed with opposites
Making a self alternate, where each hour
Was critic of the last, each mood too strong
For tolerance of its fellow in close yoke.
The ardent planets stationed as supreme,
Potent in action, suffer light malign
From luminaries large and coldly bright
Inspiring meditative doubt, which straight
Doubts of itself, by interposing act
Of Jupiter in the fourth house fortified
With power ancestral. So, my lord, I read
The changeless in the changing; so I read
The constant action of celestial powers
Mixed into waywardness of mortal men,
Whereof no sage's eye can trace the course
And see the close.

DON SILVA.

Fruitful result, O sage!
Certain uncertainty.

SEPHARDO.

Yea, a result
Fruitful as seeded earth, where certainty
Would be as barren as a globe of gold.
I love you, and would serve you well, my lord.
Your rashness vindicates itself too much,
Puts harness on of cobweb theory
While rushing like a cataract. Be warned.
Resolve with you is a fire-breathing steed,
But it sees visions, and may feel the air
Impassable with thoughts that come too late,
Rising from out the grave of murdered honor.
Look at your image in your horoscope:

(*Laying the horoscope before* DON SILVA.)

You are so mixed, my lord, that each to-day
May seem a maniac to its morrow.

DON SILVA (*pushing away the horoscope, rising and turning to look out at the open window*).

No!
No morrow e'er will say that I am mad
Not to renounce her. Risks! I know them all.
I've dogged each lurking, ambushed consequence.
I've handled every chance to know its shape
As blind men handle bolts. Oh, I'm too sane!
I see the Prior's nets. He does my deed;
For he has narrowed all my life to this—
That I must find her by some hidden means.

(*He turns and stands close in front of* SEPHARDO.)

One word, Sephardo—leave that horoscope,
Which is but iteration of myself,
And give me promise. Shall I count on you
To act upon my signal? Kings of Spain
Like me have found their refuge in a Jew,
And trusted in his counsel. You will help me?

SEPHARDO.

Yes, my lord, I will help you. Israel

Is to the nations as the body's heart:
Thus writes our poet Jehuda. I will act
So that no man may ever say through me
"Your Israel is naught," and make my deeds
The mud they fling upon my brethren.
I will not fail you, save—you know the terms:
I am a Jew, and not that infamous life
That takes on bastardy, will know no father,
So shrouds itself in the pale abstract, Man.
You should be sacrificed to Israel
If Israel needed it.

DON SILVA.

I fear not that.
I am no friend of fines and banishment,
Or flames that, fed on heretics, still gape,
And must have heretics made to feed them still.
I take your terms, and for the rest, your love
Will not forsake me.

SEPHARDO.

'Tis hard Roman love,
That looks away and stretches forth the sword
Bared for its master's breast to run upon.
But you will have it so. Love shall obey.

(DON SILVA *turns to the window again, and is silent for a few moments, looking at the sky.*)

DON SILVA.

See now, Sephardo, you would keep no faith
To smooth the path of cruelty. Confess,
The deed I would not do, save for the strait
Another brings me to (quit my command,
Resign it for brief space, I mean no more)—
Were that deed branded, then the brand should fix
On him who urged me.

SEPHARDO.

Will it, though, my lord?

DON SILVA.

I speak not of the fact but of the right.

SEPHARDO.

My lord, you said but now you were resolved.
Question not if the world will be unjust
Branding your deed. If conscience has two courts
With differing verdicts, where shall lie the appeal?
Our law must be without us or within.
The Highest speaks through all our people's voice,
Custom, tradition, and old sanctities;
Or he reveals himself by new decrees
Of inward certitude.

DON SILVA.

My love for her
Makes highest law, must be the voice of God.

SEPHARDO.

I thought, but now, you seemed to make excuse,
And plead as in some court where Spanish knights
Are tried by other laws than those of love.

DON SILVA.

'Twas momentary. I shall dare it all.
How the great planet glows, and looks at me,
And seems to pierce me with his effluence!
Were he a living God, these rays that stir
In me the pulse of wonder were in him
Fullness of knowledge. Are you certified,
Sephardo, that the astral science shrinks
To such pale ashes, dead symbolic forms
For that congenital mixture of effects
Which life declares without the aid of lore?
If there are times propitious or malign
To our first framing, then must all events
Have favoring periods: you cull your plants
By signal of the heavens, then why not trace
As others would by astrologic rule
Times of good augury for momentous acts,—
As secret journeys?

SEPHARDO.

Oh, my lord, the stars
Act not as witchcraft or as muttered spells.
I said before they are not absolute,

And tell no fortunes. I adhere alone
To such tradition of their agencies
As reason fortifies.

DON SILVA.

A barren science!
Some argue now 'tis folly. 'Twere as well
Be of their mind. If those bright stars had will—
But they are fatal fires, and know no love.
Of old, I think, the world was happier
With many gods, who held a struggling life
As mortals do, and helped men in the straits
Of forced misdoing. I doubt that horoscope.

(DON SILVA *turns from the window and reseats himself opposite* SEPHARDO.)

I am most self-contained, and strong to bear.
No man save you has seen my trembling lip
Utter her name, since she was lost to me.
I'll face the progeny of all my deeds.

SEPHARDO.

May they be fair! No horoscope makes slaves.
'Tis but a mirror, shows one image forth,
And leaves the future dark with endless "ifs."

DON SILVA.

I marvel, my Sephardo, you can pinch
With confident selection these few grains,
And call them verity, from out the dust
Of crumbling error. Surely such thought creeps,
With insect exploration of the world.
Were I a Hebrew, now, I would be bold.
Why should you fear, not being Catholic?

SEPHARDO.

Lo! you yourself, my lord, mix subtleties
With gross belief; by momentary lapse
Conceive, with all the vulgar, that we Jews
Must hold ourselves God's outlaws, and defy
All good with blasphemy, because we hold
Your good is evil; think we must turn pale

To see our portraits painted in your hell,
And sin the more for knowing we are lost.

DON SILVA.

Read not my words with malice. I but meant,
My temper hates an over-cautious march.

SEPHARDO.

The Unnameable made not the search for truth
To suit hidalgos' temper. I abide
By that wise spirit of listening reverence
Which marks the boldest doctors of our race.
For Truth, to us, is like a living child
Born of two parents: if the parents part
And will divide the child, how shall it live?
Or, I will rather say: Two angels guide
The path of man, both aged and yet young,
As angels are, ripening through endless years.
On one he leans: some call her Memory,
And some Tradition; and her voice is sweet,
With deep mysterious accords: the other,
Floating above, holds down a lamp which streams
A light divine and searching on the earth,
Compelling eyes and footsteps. Memory yields,
Yet clings with loving check, and shines anew
Reflecting all the rays of that bright lamp
Our angel Reason holds. We had not walked
But for Tradition; we walk evermore
To higher paths, by brightening Reason's lamp.
Still we are purblind, tottering. I hold less
Than Aben-Ezra, of that aged lore
Brought by long centuries from Chaldæan plains;
The Jew-taught Florentine rejects it all.
For still the light is measured by the eye,
And the weak organ fails. I may see ill;
But over all belief is faithfulness,
Which fulfills vision with obedience.
So, I must grasp my morsels: truth is oft
Scattered in fragments round a stately pile
Built half of error; and the eye's defect
May breed too much denial. But, my lord,
I weary your sick soul. Go now with me
Into the turret. We will watch the spheres,
And see the constellations bend and plunge

Into a depth of being where our eyes
Hold them no more. We'll quit ourselves and be
The red Aldebaran or bright Sirius,
And sail as in a solemn voyage, bound
On some great quest we know not.

DON SILVA.

Let us go.
She may be watching too, and thought of her
Sways me, as if she knew, to every act
Of pure allegiance.

SEPHARDO.

That is love's perfection—
Tuning the soul to all her harmonies
So that no chord can jar. Now we will mount.

A large hall in the Castle, of Moorish architecture. On the side where the windows are, an outer gallery. Pages and other young gentlemen attached to DON SILVA'S *household, gathered chiefly at one end of the hall. Some are moving about; others are lounging on the carved benches; others, half stretched on pieces of matting and carpet, are gambling.* ARIAS, *a stripling of fifteen, sings by snatches in a boyish treble, as he walks up and down, and tosses back the nuts which another youth flings toward him. In the middle* DON AMADOR, *a gaunt, gray-haired soldier, in a handsome uniform, sits in a marble red-cushioned chair, with a large book spread out on his knees, from which he is reading aloud, while his voice is half-drowned by the talk that is going on around him, first one voice and then another surging above the hum.*

ARIAS (*singing*).

There was a holy hermit
Who counted all things loss
For Christ his Master's glory;
He made an ivory cross,
And as he knelt before it
And wept his murdered Lord,
The ivory turned to iron,
The cross became a sword.

JOSÉ (*from the floor*).

I say, twenty cruzados! thy Galician wit can never count.

HERNANDO (*also from the floor*).

And thy Sevillian wit always counts double.

ARIAS (*singing*).

The tears that fell upon it,
They turned to red, red rust,
The tears that fell from off it
Made writing in the dust.
The holy hermit, gazing,
Saw words upon the ground:
"The sword be red forever
With the blood of false Mahound."

DON AMADOR (*looking up from his book, and raising his voice*).

What, gentlemen! Our Glorious Lady defend us!

ENRIQUEZ (*from the benches*).

Serves the infidels right! They have sold Christians enough to people half the towns in Paradise. If the Queen, now, had divided the pretty damsels of Malaga among the Castilians who have been helping in the holy war, and not sent half of them to Naples——

ARIAS (*singing again*).

At the battle of Clavijo
In the days of King Ramiro,
Help us, Allah! cried the Moslem,
Cried the Spaniard, Heaven's chosen,
God and Santiago!

FABIAN.

Oh, the very tail of our chance has vanished. The royal army is breaking up—going home for the winter. The Grand Master sticks to his own border.

ARIAS (*singing*).

Straight out-flushing like the rainbow,

See him come, celestial Baron,
Mounted knight, with red-crossed banner,
Plunging earthward to the battle,
Glorious Santiago!

HURTADO.

Yes, yes, through the pass of By-and-by, you go to the valley of Never. We might have done a great feat, if the Marquis of Cadiz——

ARIAS (*sings*).

As the flame before the swift wind,
See, he fires us, we burn with him!
Flash our swords, dash Pagans backward—
Victory he! pale fear is Allah!
God with Santiago!

DON AMADOR (*raising his voice to a cry*).

Sangre de Dios, gentlemen!

(*He shuts the book, and lets it fall with a bang on the floor. There is instant silence.*)

To what good end is it that I, who studied at Salamanca, and can write verses agreeable to the Glorious lady, with the point of a sword which hath done harder service, am reading aloud in a clerkly manner from a book which hath been culled from the flowers of all books, to instruct you in the knowledge befitting those who would be knights and worthy hidalgos? I had as lief be reading in a belfry. And gambling too! As if it were a time when we needed not the help of God and the saints! Surely for the space of one hour ye might subdue your tongues to your ears, that so your tongues might learn somewhat of civility and modesty. Wherefore am I master of the Duke's retinue, if my voice is to run along like a gutter in a storm?

HURTADO (*lifting up the book, and respectfully presenting it to* DON AMADOR).

Pardon, Don Amador! The air is so commoved by your voice, that it stirs our tongues in spite of us.

DON AMADOR (*reopening the book*).

Confess, now; it is a goose-headed trick, that when

rational sounds are made for your edification, you find naught in it but an occasion for purposeless gabble. I will report it to the Duke, and the reading-time shall be doubled, and my office of reader shall be handed over to Fray Domingo.

(*While* DON AMADOR *has been speaking*, DON SILVA, *with* DON ALVAR, *has appeared walking in the outer gallery on which the windows are opened.*)

ALL (*in concert*).

No, no, no.

DON AMADOR.

Are ye ready, then, to listen, if I finish the wholesome extract from the Seven Parts, wherein the wise King Alfonso hath set down the reason why knights should be of gentle birth? Will ye now be silent?

ALL.

Yes, silent.

DON AMADOR.

But when I pause, and look up, I give any leave to speak, if he hath aught pertinent to say.

(*Reads.*)

"And this nobility cometh in three ways; *first*, by lineage, *secondly*, by science, and *thirdly*, by valor and worthy behavior. Now, although they who gain nobility through science or good deeds are rightfully called noble and gentle; nevertheless, they are with the highest fitness so called who are noble by ancient lineage, and lead a worthy life as by inheritance from afar; and hence are more bound and constrained to act well, and guard themselves from error and wrong-doing; for in their case it is more true that by evil-doing they bring injury and shame not only on themselves, but also on those from whom they are derived."

DON AMADOR (*placing his forefinger for a mark on the page, and looking up, while he keeps his voice raised, as wishing* DON SILVA *to overhear him in the judicious discharge of his function*).

Hear ye that, young gentlemen? See ye not that if ye have but bad manners even, they disgrace you more than gross misdoings disgrace the low-born? Think you, Arias, it becomes the son of your house irreverently to sing and fling nuts, to the interruption of your elders?

ARIAS (*sitting on the floor, and leaning backward on his elbows.*)

Nay, Don Amador; King Alfonso, they say, was a heretic, and I think that is not true writing. For noble birth gives us more leave to do ill if we like.

DON AMADOR (*lifting his brows*).

What bold and blasphemous talk is this?

ARIAS.

Why, nobles are only punished now and then, in a grand way, and have their heads cut off, like the Grand Constable. I shouldn't mind that.

JOSÉ.

Nonsense, Arias! nobles have their heads cut off because their crimes are noble. If they did what was unknightly, they would come to shame. Is not that true, Don Amador?

DON AMADOR.

Arias is a contumacious puppy, who will bring dishonor on his parentage. Pray, sirrah, whom did you ever hear speak as you have spoken?

ARIAS.

Nay, I speak out of my own head. I shall go and ask the Duke.

HURTADO.

Now, now! you are too bold, Arias.

ARIAS.

Oh, he is never angry with me,—(*Dropping his voice*) because the Lady Fedalma liked me. She said I was a

good boy, and pretty, and that is what you are not, Hurtado.

HURTADO.

Girl-face! See, now, if you dare ask the Duke.

(DON SILVA *is just entering the hall from the gallery, with* DON ALVAR *behind him, intending to pass out at the other end. All rise with homage.* DON SILVA *bows coldly and abstractedly.* ARIAS *advances from the group, and goes up to* DON SILVA.)

ARIAS.

My lord, is it true that a noble is more dishonored than other men if he does aught dishonorable?

DON SILVA (*first blushing deeply, and grasping his sword, then raising his hand and giving* ARIAS *a blow on the ear*).

Varlet!

ARIAS,

My lord, I am a gentleman.

(DON SILVA *pushes him away, and passes on hurriedly.*)

DON ALVAR (*following and turning to speak*).

Go, go! you should not speak to the Duke when you are not called upon. He is ill and much distempered.

(ARIAS *retires, flushed, with tears in his eyes. His companions look too much surprised to triumph.* DON AMADOR *remains silent and confused.*)

The Plaça Santiago during busy market-time. Mules and asses laden with fruits and vegetables. Stalls and booths filled with wares of all sorts. A crowd of buyers and sellers. A stalwart woman, with keen eyes, leaning over the panniers of a mule laden with apples, watches LORENZO, *who is lounging through the market. As he approaches her, he is met by* BLASCO.

LORENZO.

Well met, friend.

BLASCO.

Ay, for we are soon to part,
And I would see you at the hostelry,
To take my reckoning. I go forth to-day.

LORENZO.

'Tis grievous parting with good company.
I would I had the gold to pay such guests
For all my pleasure in their talk.

BLASCO.

Why, yes;
A solid-headed man of Aragon
Has matter in him that you Southerners lack.
You like my company—'tis natural.
But, look you, I have done my business well,
Have sold and ta'en commissions. I come straight
From—you know who—I like not naming him.
I'm a thick man; you reach not my backbone
With any tooth-pick; but I tell you this:
He reached it with his eye, right to the marrow.
It gave me heart that I had plate to sell,
For, saint or no saint, a good silversmith
Is wanted for God's service; and my plate—
He judged it well—bought nobly.

LORENZO.

A great man,
And holy!

BLASCO.

Yes, I'm glad I leave to-day.
For there are stories give a sort of smell—
One's nose has fancies. A good trader, sir,
Likes not this plague of lapsing in the air,
Most caught by men with funds. And they *do* say
There's a great terror here in Moors and Jews,
I would say, Christians of unhappy blood.
'Tis monstrous, sure, that men of substance lapse,
And risk their property. I know I'm sound.
No heresy was ever bait to me. Whate'er
Is the right faith, that I believe—naught else.

LORENZO.

Ay, truly, for the flavor of true faith
Once known must sure be sweetest to the taste.
But an uneasy mood is now abroad
Within the town; partly, for that the Duke
Being sorely sick, has yielded the command
To Don Diego, a most valiant man,
More Catholic than the Holy Father's self,
Half chiding God that He will tolerate
A Jew or Arab; though, 'tis plain they're made
For profit of good Christians. And weak heads—
Panic will knit all disconnected facts—
Draw hence belief in evil auguries,
Rumors of accusation and arrest,
All air-begotten. Sir, you need not go.
But if it must be so, I'll follow you
In fifteen minutes—finish marketing,
Then be at home to speed you on your way.

BLASCO.

Do so. I'll back to Saragossa straight.
The court and nobles are retiring now
And wending northward. There'll be fresh demand
For bells and images against the Spring,
When doubtless our great Catholic sovereigns
Will move to conquest of these eastern parts,
And cleanse Granada from the infidel.
Stay, sir, with God, until we meet again!

LORENZO.

Go, sir, with God, until I follow you.

(*Exit* BLASCO. LORENZO *passes on toward the market-woman, who, as he approaches, raises herself from her leaning attitude.*)

LORENZO.

Good-day, my mistress. How's your merchandise?
Fit for a host to buy? Your apples now,
They have fair cheeks; how are they at the core?

MARKET-WOMAN.

Good, good, sir! Taste and try. See, here is one
Weighs a man's head. The best are bound with tow:
They're worth the pains, to keep the peel from splits.

(*She takes out an apple bound with tow, and, as she puts it into* LORENZO'S *hand, speaks in a lower tone.*)

'Tis called the Miracle. You open it,
And find it full of speech.

LORENZO.

Ay, give it me,
I'll take it to the Doctor in the tower.
He feeds on fruit, and if he likes the sort
I'll buy them for him. Meanwhile, drive your ass
Round to my hostelry. I'll straight be there.
You'll not refuse some barter?

MARKET-WOMAN.

No, not I.
Feathers and skins.

LORENZO.

Good, till we meet again.

(LORENZO, *after smelling at the apple, puts it into a pouch-like basket which hangs before him, and walks away. The woman drives off the mule.*)

A LETTER.

"Zarca, the chieftain of the Gypsies, greets
"The King El Zagal. Let the force be sent
"With utmost swiftness to the Pass of Luz.
"A good five hundred added to my bands
"Will master all the garrison: the town
"Is half with us, and will not lift an arm
"Save on our side. My scouts have found a way
"Where once we thought the fortress most secure:
"Spying a man upon the height, they traced,
"By keen conjecture piecing broken sight,
"His downward path, and found its issue. There
"A file of us can mount, surprise the fort
"And give the signal to our friends within
"To ope the gates for our confederate bands,
"Who will lie eastward ambushed by the rocks,
"Waiting the night. Enough; give me command,
"Bedmár is yours. Chief Zarca will redeem
"His pledge of highest service to the Moor:

"Let the Moor too be faithful and repay
"The Gypsy with the furtherance he needs
"To lead his people over Bahr el Scham
"And plant them on the shore of Africa.
"So may the King El Zagal live as one
"Who, trusting Allah will be true to him,
"Maketh himself as Allah true to friends."

BOOK III.

QUIT now the town, and with a journeying dream
Swift as the wings of sound yet seeming slow
Through multitudinous pulsing of stored sense
And spiritual space, see walls and towers
Lie in the silent whiteness of a trance,
Giving no sign of that warm life within
That moves and murmurs through their hidden heart.
Pass o'er the mountain, wind in sombre shade,
Then wind into the light and see the town
Shrunk to white crust upon the darker rock.
Turn east and south, descend, then rise anew
'Mid smaller mountains ebbing toward the plain:
Scent the fresh breath of the height-loving herbs
That, trodden by the pretty parted hoofs
Of nimble goats, sigh at the innocent bruise,
And with a mingled difference exquisite
Pour a sweet burden on the buoyant air.
Pause now and be all ear. Far from the south,
Seeking the listening silence of the heights,
Comes a slow-dying sound—the Moslems' call
To prayer in afternoon. Bright in the sun
Like tall white sails on a green shadowy sea
Stand Moorish watch-towers: 'neath that eastern sky
Couches unseen the strength of Moorish Baza;
Where the meridian bends lies Guadix, hold
Of brave El Zagal. This is Moorish land,
Where Allah lives unconquered in dark breasts
And blesses still the many-nourishing earth
With dark-armed industry. See from the steep
The scattered olives hurry in gray throngs
Down toward the valley, where the little stream
Parts a green hollow 'twixt the gentler slopes;

And in that hollow, dwellings: not white homes
Of building Moors, but little swarthy tents
Such as of old perhaps on Asian plains,
Or wending westward past the Caucasus,
Our fathers raised to rest in. Close they swarm
About two taller tents, and viewed afar
Might seem a dark-robed crowd in penitence
That silent kneel; but come now in their midst
And watch a busy, bright-eyed, sportive life!
Tall maidens bend to feed the tethered goat,
The ragged kirtle fringing at the knee
Above the living curves, the shoulder's smoothness
Parting the torrent strong of ebon hair.
Women with babes, the wild and neutral glance
Swayed now to sweet desire of mothers' eyes,
Rock their strong cradling arms and chant low strains
Taught by monotonous and soothing winds
That fall at night-time on the dozing ear.
The crones plait reeds, or shred the vivid herbs
Into the caldron: tiny urchins crawl
Or sit and gurgle forth their infant joy.
Lads lying sphynx-like with uplifted breast
Propped on their elbows, their black manes tossed back,
Fling up the coin and watch its fatal fall,
Dispute and scramble, run and wrestle fierce,
Then fall to play and fellowship again;
Or in a thieving swarm they run to plague
The grandsires, who return with rabbits slung,
And with the mules fruit-laden from the fields.
Some striplings choose the smooth stones from the brook
To serve the slingers, cut the twigs for snares,
Or trim the hazel-wands, or at the bark
Of some exploring dog they dart away
With swift precision toward a moving speck.
These are the brood of Zarca's Gypsy tribe;
Most like an earth-born race bred by the Sun
On some rich tropic soil, the father's light
Flashing in coal-black eyes, the mother's blood
With bounteous elements feeding their young limbs.
The stalwart men and youths are at the wars
Following their chief, all save a trusty band
Who keep strict watch along the northern heights:
But see, upon a pleasant spot removed
From the camp's hubbub, where the thicket strong

Of huge-eared cactus makes a bordering curve
And casts a shadow, lies a sleeping man
With Spanish hat screening his upturned face,
His doublet loose, his right arm backward flung,
His left caressing close the long-necked lute
That seems to sleep too, leaning toward its lord.
He draws deep breath secure but not unwatched.
Moving a-tiptoe, silent as the elves,
As mischievous, too, trip three barefooted girls
Not opened yet to womanhood—dark flowers
In slim long buds: some paces farther off
Gathers a little white-teethed shaggy group,
A grinning chorus to the merry play.
The tripping girls have robbed the sleeping man
Of all his ornaments. Hita is decked
With an embroidered scarf across her rags;
Tralla, with thorns for pins, sticks two rosettes
Upon her threadbare woolen; Hinda now,
Prettiest and boldest, tucks her kirtle up
As wallet for the stolen buttons—then
Bends with her knife to cut from off the hat
The aigrette and long feather; deftly cuts,
Yet wakes the sleeper, who with sudden start
Shakes off the masking hat and shows the face
Of Juan: Hinda swift as thought leaps back,
But carries off the spoil triumphantly,
And leads the chorus of a happy laugh,
Running with all the naked-footed imps,
Till with safe survey all can face about
And watch for signs of stimulating chase,
While Hinda ties long grass around her brow
To stick the feather in with majesty.
Juan still sits contemplative, with looks
Alternate at the spoilers and their work.

JUAN.

Ah, you marauding kite—my feather gone!
My belt, my scarf, my buttons and rosettes!
This is to be a brother of your tribe!
The fiery-blooded children of the Sun—
So says chief Zarca—children of the Sun!
Ay, ay, the black and stinging flies he breeds
To plague the decent body of mankind.
"Orpheus, professor of the *gai saber*,

Made all the brutes polite by dint of song."
Pregnant—but as a guide in daily life
Delusive. For if song and music cure
The barbarous trick of thieving, 'tis a cure
That works as slowly as old Doctor Time
In curing folly. Why, the minxes there
Have rhythm in their toes, and music rings
As readily from them as from little bells
Swung by the breeze. Well, I will try the physic.

(*He touches his lute.*)

Hem! taken rightly, any single thing,
The Rabbis say, implies all other things.
A knotty task, though, the unraveling
Meum and *Tuum* from a saraband:
It needs a subtle logic, nay, perhaps
A good large property, to see the thread.

(*He touches the lute again.*)

There's more of odd than even in this word.
Else pretty sinners would not be let off
Sooner than ugly; for if honeycombs
Are to be got by stealing, they should go
Where life is bitterest on the tongue. And yet—
Because this minx has pretty ways I wink
At all her tricks, though if a flat-faced lass,
With eyes askew, were half as bold as she,
I should chastise her with a hazel switch.
I'm a plucked peacock—even my voice and wit
Without a tail!—why, any fool detects
The absence of your tail, but twenty fools
May not detect the presence of your wit.

(*He touches his lute again.*)

Well, I must coax my tail back cunningly,
For to run after these brown lizards—ah!
I think the lizards lift their ears at this.

(*As he thrums his lute the lads and girls gradually approach: he touches it more briskly, and* HINDA, *advancing, begins to move arms and legs with an initiatory dancing movement, smiling coaxingly at* JUAN. *He suddenly stops, lays down his lute and folds his arms.*)

JUAN.

What, you expect a tune to dance to, eh?

HINDA, HITA, TRALLA, AND THE REST (*clapping their hands.*)

Yes, yes, a tune, a tune!

JUAN.

But that is what you cannot have, my sweet brothers and sisters. The tunes are all dead—dead as the tunes of the lark when you have plucked his wings off; dead as the song of the grasshopper when the ass has swallowed him. I can play and sing no more. Hinda has killed my tunes.

(*All cry out in consternation.* HINDA *gives a wail and tries to examine the lute.*)

JUAN (*waving her off*).

Understand, Señora Hinda, that the tunes are in me; they are not in the lute till I put them there. And if you cross my humor, I shall be as tuneless as a bag of wool. If the tunes are to be brought to life again, I must have my feather back.

(HINDA *kisses his hands and feet coaxingly.*)

No, no! not a note will come for coaxing. The feather, I say, the feather!

(HINDA *sorrowfully takes off the feather, and gives it to* JUAN.)

Ah, now let us see. Perhaps a tune will come.

(*He plays a measure, and the three girls begin to dance; then he suddenly stops.*)

JUAN.

No, the tune will not come: it wants the aigrette (*pointing to it on Hinda's neck*).

(HINDA, *with rather less hesitation, but again sorrowfully, takes off the aigrette, and gives it to him.*)

JUAN.

Ha! (*He plays again, but, after rather a longer time, again stops.*) No, no; 'tis the buttons are wanting, Hinda, the buttons. This tune feeds chiefly on buttons—a greedy tune. It wants one, two, three, four, five, six. Good!

(*After* HINDA *has given up the buttons, and* JUAN *has laid them down one by one, he begins to play again, going on longer than before, so that the dancers become excited by the movement. Then he stops.*)

JUAN.

Ah, Hita, it is the belt, and Tralla, the rosettes—both are wanting. I see the tune will not go on without them.

(HITA *and* TRALLA *take off the belt and rosettes, and lay them down quickly, being fired by the dancing, and eager for the music. All the articles lie by* JUAN'S *side on the ground.*)

JUAN.

Good, good, my docile wild-cats! Now I think the tunes are all alive again. Now you may dance and sing too. Hinda, my little screamer, lead off with the song I taught you, and let us see if the tune will go right on from beginning to end.

(*He plays. The dance begins again,* HINDA *singing. All the other boys and girls join in the chorus, and all at last dance wildly.*)

SONG.

All things journey: sun and moon,
Morning, noon, and afternoon,
Night and all her stars:
'Twixt the east and western bars
Round they journey,
Come and go!
We go with them!
For to roam and ever roam
Is the Zincali's loved home.

Earth is good, the hillside breaks
By the ashen roots and makes
Hungry nostrils glad:

Then we run till we are mad,
Like the horses,
And we cry,
None shall catch us!
Swift winds wing us — we are free —
Drink the air — we Zíncali!

Falls the snow: the pine-branch split,
Call the fire out, see it flit,
Through the dry leaves run,
Spread and glow, and make a sun
In the dark tent:
O warm dark!
Warm as conies!
Strong fire loves us, we are warm!
Who the Zíncali shall harm?

Onward journey: fires are spent;
Sunward, sunward! lift the tent,
Run before the rain,
Through the pass, along the plain.
Hurry, hurry,
Lift us, wind!
Like the horses.
For to roam and ever roam
Is the Zíncali's loved home.

(*When the dance is at its height,* HINDA *breaks away from the rest, and dances round* JUAN, *who is now standing. As he turns a little to watch her movement, some of the boys skip toward the feather, aigrette, etc., snatch them up, and run away, swiftly followed by* HITA, TRALLA, *and the rest.* HINDA, *as she turns again, sees them, screams, and falls in her whirling; but immediately gets up, and rushes after them, still screaming with rage.*)

JUAN.

Santiago! these imps get bolder. Ha ha! Señora Hinda, this finishes your lesson in ethics. You have seen the advantage of giving up stolen goods. Now you see the ugliness of thieving when practiced by others. That fable of mine about the tunes was excellently devised. I feel like an ancient sage instructing our lisping ancestors. My memory will descend as the Orpheus of Gypsies. But I

must prepare a rod for those rascals. I'll bastinado them with prickly pears. It seems to me these needles will have a sound moral teaching in them.

(*While* JUAN *takes a knife from his belt, and surveys a bush of the prickly pear,* HINDA *returns.*)

JUAN.

Pray, Señora, why do you fume? Did you want to steal my ornaments again yourself?

HINDA (*sobbing*).

No; I thought you would give them me back again.

JUAN.

What, did you want the tunes to die again? Do you like finery better than dancing?

HINDA.

Oh, that was a tale! I shall tell tales, too, when I want to get anything I can't steal. And I know what I will do. I shall tell the boys I've found some little foxes, and I will never say where they are till they give me back the feather!

(*She runs off again.*)

JUAN.

Hem! the disciple seems to seize the mode sooner than the matter. Teaching virtue with this prickly pear may only teach the youngsters to use a new weapon; as your teaching orthodoxy with faggots may only bring up a fashion of roasting. Dios! my remarks grow too pregnant—my wits get a plethora by solitary feeding on the produce of my own wisdom.

(*As he puts up his knife again,* HINDA *comes running back, and crying, "Our Queen! our Queen!"* JUAN *adjusts his garments and his lute, while* HINDA *turns to meet* FEDALMA, *who wears a Moorish dress, her black hair hanging round her in plaits, a white turban on her head, a dagger by her side. She carries a scarf on her left arm, which she holds up as a shade.*)

FEDALMA (*patting* HINDA'S *head*).

How now, wild one? You are hot and panting. Go to my tent, and help Nouna to plait reeds.

(HINDA *kisses* FEDALMA'S *hand and runs off.* FEDALMA *advances toward* JUAN, *who kneels to take up the edge of her cymar, and kisses it.*)

JUAN.

How is it with you, lady? You look sad.

FEDALMA.

Oh, I am sick at heart. The eye of day,
The insistent summer sun, seems pitiless,
Shining in all the barren crevices
Of weary life, leaving no shade, no dark,
Where I may dream that hidden waters lie;
As pitiless as to some shipwrecked man
Who gazing from his narrow shoal of sand
On the wide unspecked round of blue and blue
Sees that full light is errorless despair.
The insects' hum that slurs the silent dark
Startles and seems to cheat me, as the tread
Of coming footsteps cheats the midnight watcher
Who holds her heart and waits to hear them pause,
And hears them never pause, but pass and die.
Music sweeps by me as a messenger
Carrying a message that is not for me.
The very sameness of the hills and sky
Is obduracy, and the lingering hours
Wait round me dumbly, like superfluous slaves,
Of whom I want naught but the secret news
They are forbid to tell. And, Juan, you—
You, too, are cruel—would be over-wise
In judging your friend's needs, and choose to hide
Something I crave to know.

JUAN.

I, lady?

FEDALMA.

You.

JUAN.

I never had the virtue to hide aught,
Save what a man is whipped for publishing.
I'm no more reticent than the voluble air—
Dote on disclosure—never could contain
The latter half of all my sentences,
But for the need to utter the beginning.
My lust to tell is so importunate
That it abridges every other vice,
And makes me temperate for want of time.
I dull sensation in the haste to say
'Tis this or that, and choke report with surmise.
Judge, then, dear lady, if I could be mute
When but a glance of yours had bid me speak.

FEDALMA.

Nay, sing such falsities!—you mock me worse
By speech that gravely seems to ask belief.
You are but babbling in a part you play

To please my father. Oh, 'tis well meant, say you—
Pity for woman's weakness. Take my thanks.

JUAN.

Thanks angrily bestowed are red-hot coin
Burning your servant's palm.

FEDALMA.

Deny it not,
You know how many leagues this camp of ours
Lies from Bedmár—what mountains lie between—
Could tell me if you would about the Duke—
That he is comforted, sees how he gains
Losing the Zincala, finds now how slight
The thread Fedalma made in that rich web,
A Spanish noble's life. No, that is false!
He never would think lightly of our love.
Some evil has befallen him—he's slain—
Has sought for danger and has beckoned death
Because I made all life seem treachery.
Tell me the worst—be merciful—no worst,
Against the hideous painting of my fear,
Would not show like a better,

JUAN.

If I speak,
Will you believe your slave? For truth is scant;
And where the appetite is still to hear
And not believe, falsehood would stint it less.
How say you? Does your hunger's fancy choose
The meagre fact?

FEDALMA (*seating herself on the ground*).

Yes, yes, the truth, dear Juan.
Sit now, and tell me all.

JUAN.

That all is naught.
I can unleash my fancy if you wish
And hunt for phantoms: shoot an airy guess
And bring down airy likelihood—some lie
Masked cunningly to look like royal truth
And cheat the shooter, while King Fact goes free;
Or else some image of reality
That doubt will handle and reject as false
As for conjecture—I can thread the sky
Like any swallow, but, if you insist
On knowledge that would guide a pair of feet
Right to Bedmár, across the Moorish bounds,
A mule that dreams of stumbling over stones
Is better stored.

FEDALMA.

And you have gathered naught
About the border wars? No news, no hint
Of any rumors that concern the Duke—
Rumors kept from me by my father?

JUAN.

None.
Your father trusts no secret to the echoes.
Of late his movements have been hid from all
Save those few hundred chosen Gypsy breasts
He carries with him. Think you he's a man
To let his projects slip from out his belt,
Then whisper him who haps to find them strayed
To be so kind as keep his counsel well?

Why, if he found me knowing aught too much,
He would straight gag or strangle me, and say,
"Poor hound! it was a pity that his bark
Could chance to mar my plans: he loved my daughter—
The idle hound had naught to do but love,
So followed to the battle and got crushed."

FEDALMA (*holding out her hand, which* JUAN *kisses*).

Good Juan, I could have no nobler friend.
You'd ope your veins and let your life-blood out
To save another's pain, yet hide the deed
With jesting—say, 'twas merest accident,
A sportive scratch that went by chance too deep—
And die content with men's slight thoughts of you,
Finding your glory in another's joy.

JUAN.

Dub not my likings virtues, lest they get
A drug-like taste, and breed a nausea.
Honey's not sweet, commended as cathartic.
Such names are parchment labels upon gems
Hiding their color. What is lovely seen
Priced in a tarif?—lapis lazuli,
Such bulk, so many drachmas: amethysts
Quoted at so much; sapphires higher still.
The stone like solid heaven in its blueness
Is what I care for, not its name or price.
So, if I live or die to serve my friend,
'Tis for my love—'tis for my friend alone,
And not for any rate that friendship bears
In heaven or on earth. Nay, I romance—
I talk of Roland and the ancient peers.
In me 'tis hardly friendship, only lack
Of a substantial self that holds a weight;
So I kiss larger things and roll with them.

FEDALMA.

Oh, you will never hide your soul from me;
I've seen the jewel's flash, and know 'tis there,
Muffle it as you will. That foam-like talk
Will not wash out a fear which blots the good
Your presence brings me. Oft I'm pierced afresh
Through all the pressure of my selfish griefs,

By thought of you. It was a rash resolve
Made you disclose yourself when you kept watch
About the terrace wall:—your pity leaped,
Seeing alone my ills and not your loss,
Self-doomed to exile. Juan, you must repent.
'Tis not in nature that resolve, which feeds
On strenuous actions, should not pine and die
In these long days of empty listlessness.

JUAN.

Repent? Not I. Repentance is the weight
Of indigested meals ta'en yesterday.
'Tis for large animals that gorge on prey,
Not for a honey-sipping butterfly.
I am a thing of rhythm and redondillas—
The momentary rainbow on the spray
Made by the thundering torrent of men's lives:
No matter whether I am here or there;
I still catch sunbeams. And in Africa,
Where melons and all fruits, they say, grow large,
Fables are real, and the apes polite,
A poet, too, may prosper past belief:
I shall grow epic, like the Florentine,
And sing the founding of our infant state,
Sing the new Gypsy Carthage.

FEDALMA.

Africa
Would we were there! Under another heaven,
In lands where neither love nor memory
Can plant a selfish hope—in lands so far
I should not seem to see the outstretched arms
That seek me, or to hear the voice that calls.
I should feel distance only and despair;
So rest forever from the thought of bliss,
And wear my weight of life's great chain unstruggling.
Juan, if I could know he would forget—
Nay, not forget, forgive me—be content
That I forsook him for no joy, but sorrow,
For sorrow chosen rather than a joy
That destiny made base! Then he would taste
No bitterness in sweet, sad memory,
And I should live unblemished in his thought,
Hallowed like her who dies an unwed bride.

Our words have wings, but fly not where we would.
Could mine but reach him, Juan!

JUAN.

Speak the wish—
My feet have wings—I'll be your Mercury.
I fear no shadowed perils by the way.
No man will wear the sharpness of his sword
On me. Nay, I'm a herald of the Muse,
Sacred for Moors and Spaniards. I will go—
Will fetch you tidings for an amulet.
But stretch not hope too strongly toward that mark
As issue of my wandering. Given, I cross
Safely the Moorish border, reach Bedmár:
Fresh counsels may prevail there, and the Duke
Being absent in the field, I may be trapped.
Men who are sour at missing larger game
May wing a chattering sparrow for revenge.
It is a chance no further worth the note
Than as a warning, lest you feared worse ill
If my return were stayed. I might be caged;
They would not harm me else. Untimely death,
The red auxiliary of the skeleton,
Has too much work on hand to think of me;
Or, if he cares to slay me, I shall fall
Choked with a grape-stone for economy.
The likelier chance is that I go and come,
Bringing you comfort back.

FEDALMA (*starts from her seat and walks to a little distance, standing a few moments with her back toward* JUAN, *then she turns round quickly, and goes toward him*).

No, Juan, no!
Those yearning words came from a soul infirm,
Crying and struggling at the pain of bonds
Which yet it would not loosen. He knows all—
All that he needs to know: I said farewell:
I stepped across the cracking earth and knew
'Twould yawn behind me. I must walk right on.
No, I will not win aught by risking you:
That risk would poison my poor hope. Besides,
'Twere treachery in me: my father wills
That we—all here—should rest within this camp.

If I can never live, like him, on faith
In glorious morrows, I am resolute.
While he treads painfully with stillest step
And beady brow, pressed 'neath the weight of arms,
Shall I, to ease my fevered restlessness,
Raise peevish moans, shattering that fragile silence?
No! On the close-thronged spaces of the earth
A battle rages: Fate has carried me
'Mid the thick arrows: I will keep my stand—
Not shrink and let the shaft pass by my breast
To pierce another. Oh, 'tis written large
The thing I have to do. But you, dear Juan,
Renounce, endure, are brave, unurged by aught
Save the sweet overflow of your good will.

(*She seats herself again.*)

JUAN.

Nay, I endure naught worse than napping sheep
When nimble birds uproot a fleecy lock
To line their nest with. See! your bondsman, queen,
The minstrel of your court, is featherless;
Deforms your presence by a moulting garb;
Shows like a roadside bush culled of its buds.
Yet, if your graciousness will not disdain
A poor plucked songster—shall he sing to you?
Some lay of afternoons—some ballad strain
Of those who ached once but are sleeping now
Under the sun-warmed flowers? 'Twill cheat the time.

FEDALMA.

Thanks, Juan—later, when this hour is passed.
My soul is clogged with self; it could not float
On with the pleasing sadness of your song.
Leave me in this green spot, but come again,—
Come with the lengthening shadows.

JUAN.

Then your slave
Will go to chase the robbers. Queen, farewell!

FEDALMA.

Best friend, my well-spring in the wilderness!

[While Juan sped along the stream, there came
From the dark tents a ringing joyous shout
That thrilled Fedalma with a summons grave
Yet welcome, too. Straightway she rose and stood,
All languor banished, with a soul suspense,
Like one who waits high presence, listening.
Was it a message, or her father's self
That made the camp so glad?
It was himself!
She saw him now advancing, girt with arms
That seemed like idle trophies hung for show
Beside the weight and fire of living strength
That made his fame. He glanced with absent triumph
As one who conquers in some field afar
And bears off unseen spoil. But nearing her,
His terrible eyes intense sent forth new rays—
A sudden sunshine where the lightning was
'Twixt meeting dark. All tenderly he laid
His hand upon her shoulder; tenderly,
His kiss upon her brow.]

ZARCA.

My royal daughter!

FEDALMA.

Father, I joy to see your safe return.

ZARCA.

Nay, I but stole the time, as hungry men
Steal from the morrow's meal, made a forced march,
Left Hassan as my watchdog, all to see
My daughter, and to feed her famished hope
With news of promise.

FEDALMA.

Is the task achieved
That was to be the herald of our flight?

ZARCA.

Not outwardly, but to my inward vision
Things are achieved when they are well begun.
The perfect archer calls the deer his own

While yet the shaft is whistling. His keen eye
Never sees failure, sees the mark alone.
You have heard naught, then—had no messenger?

FEDALMA.

I, father? no: each quiet day has fled
Like the same moth, returning with slow wing,
And pausing in the sunshine.

ZARCA.

It is well.
You shall not long count days in weariness.
Ere the full moon has waned again to new,
We shall reach Almería: Berber ships
Will take us for their freight, and we shall go
With plenteous spoil, not stolen, bravely won
By service done on Spaniards. Do you shrink?
Are you aught less than a true Zíncala?

FEDALMA.

No; but I am more. The Spaniards fostered me.

ZARCA.

They stole you first, and reared you for the flames.
I found you, rescued you, that you might live
A Zincala's life; I saved you from their doom.
Your bridal bed had been the rack.

FEDALMA (*in a low tone*).

They meant—
To seize me?—ere he came?

ZARCA.

Yes, I know all.
They found your chamber empty.

FEDALMA (*eagerly*).

Then you know—

(*Checking herself.*)

Father, my soul would be less laggard, fed
With fuller trust.

ZARCA.

My daughter, I must keep
The Arab's secret. Arabs are our friends,
Grappling for life with Christians who lay waste
Granáda's valleys, and with devilish hoofs
Trample the young green corn, with devilish play
Fell blossomed trees, and tear up well-pruned vines:
Cruel as tigers to the vanquished brave,
They wring out gold by oaths they mean to break;
Take pay for pity and are pitiless;
Then tinkle bells above the desolate earth
And praise their monstrous gods, supposed to love
The flattery of liars. I will strike
The full-gorged dragon. You, my child, must watch
The battle with a heart, not fluttering
But duteous, firm-weighted by resolve,
Choosing between two lives, like her who holds
A dagger which must pierce one of two breasts,
And one of them her father's. You divine—
I speak not closely, but in parables;
Put one for many.

FEDALMA (*collecting herself and looking firmly at* ZARCA).

Then it is your will
That I ask nothing?

ZARCA.

You shall know enough
To trace the sequence of the seed and flower.
El Zagal trusts me, rates my counsel high:
He, knowing I have won a grant of lands
Within the Berber's realm, wills me to be
The tongue of his good cause in Africa,
So gives us furtherance in our pilgrimage
For service hoped, as well as service done
In that great feat of which I am the eye,
And my five hundred Gypsies the best arm.
More, I am charged by other noble Moors
With messages of weight to Telemsán.
Ha, your eye flashes. Are you glad?

FEDALMA.

Yes, glad
That men can greatly trust a Zíncala.

ZARCA.

Why, fighting for dear life men choose their swords
For cutting only, not for ornament.
What naught but Nature gives, man takes perforce
Where she bestows it, though in vilest place.
Can he compress invention out of pride,
Make heirship do the work of muscle, sail
Toward great discoveries with a pedigree?
Sick men ask cures, and Nature serves not hers
Daintily as a feast. A blacksmith once
Founded a dynasty, and raised on high
The leathern apron over armies spread
Between the mountains like a lake of steel.

FEDALMA (*bitterly*).

To be contemned, then, is fair augury.
That pledge of future good at least is ours.

ZARCA.

Let men contemn us: 'tis such blind contempt
That leaves the wingéd broods to thrive in warmth
Unheeded, till they fill the air like storms
So we shall thrive—still darkly shall draw force
Into a new and multitudinous life
That likeness fashions to community,
Mother divine of customs, faith and laws.
'Tis ripeness, 'tis fame's zenith that kills hope.
Huge oaks are dying, forests yet to come
Lie in the twigs and rotten-seeming seeds.

FEDALMA.

And our wild Zíncali? 'Neath their rough husk
Can you discern such seed? You said our band
Was the best arm of some hard enterprise;
They give out sparks of virtue, then, and show
There's metal in their earth?

ZARCA.

Ay, metal fine
In my brave Gypsies. Not the lithest Moor
Has lither limbs for scaling, keener eye
To mark the meaning of the furthest speck
That tells of change; and they are disciplined

By faith in me, to such obedience
As needs no spy. My scalers and my scouts
Are to the Moorish force they're leagued withal
As bow-string to the bow; while I their chief
Command the enterprise and guide the will
Of Moorish captains, as the pilot guides
With eye-instructed hand the passive helm.
For high device is still the highest force,
And he who holds the secret of the wheel
May make the rivers do what work he would.
With thoughts impalpable we clutch men's souls,
Weaken the joints of armies, make them fly
Like dust and leaves before the viewless wind.
Tell me what's mirrored in the tiger's heart,
I'll rule that too.

FEDALMA (*wrought to a glow of admiration*).

O my imperial father!
'Tis where there breathes a mighty soul like yours
That men's contempt is of good augury.

ZARCA (*seizing both* FEDALMA'S *hands, and looking at her searchingly*).

And you, my daughter, what are you—if not
The Zíncala's child? Say, does not his great hope
Thrill in your veins like shouts of victory?
'Tis a vile life that like a garden pool
Lies stagnant in the round of personal loves;
That has no ear save for the tickling lute
Set to small measures—deaf to all the beats
Of that large music rolling o'er the world:
A miserable, petty low-roofed life,
That knows the mighty orbits of the skies
Through naught save light or dark in its own cabin.
The very brutes will feel the force of kind
And move together, gathering a new soul—
The soul of multitudes. Say now, my child,
You will not falter, not look back and long
For unfledged ease in some soft alien nest
The crane with outspread wing that heads the file
Pauses not, feels no backward impulses:
Behind it summer was, and is no more;
Before it lies the summer it will reach
Or perish in mid-ocean. You no less

Must feel the force sublime of growing life.
New thoughts are urgent as the growth of wings;
The widening vision is imperious
As higher members bursting the worm's sheath.
You cannot grovel in the worm's delights:
You must take wingéd pleasures, wingéd pains.
Are you not steadfast? Will you live or die
For aught below your royal heritage?
To him who holds the flickering brief torch
That lights a beacon for the perishing,
Aught else is crime. Would you let drop the torch?

FEDALMA.

Father, my soul is weak, the mist of tears
Still rises to my eyes, and hides the goal
Which to your undimmed sight is fixed and clear.
But if I cannot plant resolve on hope,
It will stand firm on certainty of woe.
I choose the ill that is most like to end
With my poor being. Hopes have precarious life.
They are oft blighted, withered, snapped sheer off
In vigorous growth and turned to rottenness.
But faithfulness can feed on suffering,
And knows no disappointment. Trust in me!
If it were needed, this poor trembling hand
Should grasp the torch—strive not to let it fall
Though it were burning down close to my flesh,
No beacon lighted yet: through the damp dark
I should still hear the cry of gasping swimmers.
Father, I will be true!

ZARCA.

I trust that word.
And, for your sadness—you are young—the bruise
Will leave no mark. The worst of misery
Is when a nature framed for noblest things
Condemns itself in youth to petty joys,
And, sore athirst for air, breathes scanty life
Gasping from out the shallows. You are saved
From such poor doubleness. The life we choose
Breathes high, and sees a full-arched firmament.
Our deeds shall speak like rock-hewn messages,
Teaching great purpose to the distant time.
Now I must hasten back. I shall but speak

To Nadar of the order he must keep
In setting watch and victualing. The stars
And the young moon must see me at my post.
Nay, rest you here. Farewell, my younger self—
Strong-hearted daughter! Shall I live in you
When the earth covers me?

FEDALMA.

My father, death
Should give your will divineness, make it strong
With the beseechings of a mighty soul
That left its work unfinished Kiss me now:

(*They embrace, and she adds tremulously as they part,*)

And when you see fair hair, be pitiful.

(*Exit* ZARCA.)

(FEDALMA *seats herself on the bank, leans her head forward, and covers her face with her drapery. While she is seated thus,* HINDA *comes from the bank, with a branch of musk roses in her hand. Seeing* FEDALMA *with head bent and covered, she pauses, and begins to move on tiptoe.*)

HINDA.

Our Queen! Can she be crying? There she sits
As I did every day when my dog Saad
Sickened and yelled, and seemed to yell so loud
After we buried him, I oped his grave.

(*She comes forward on tiptoe, kneels at* FEDALMA'S *feet, and embraces them.* FEDALMA *uncovers her head.*)

FEDALMA.

Hinda! what is it?

HINDA.

Queen, a branch of roses—
So sweet, you'll love to smell them. 'Twas the last.
I climbed the bank to get it before Tralla,
And slipped and scratched my arm. But I don't mind.
You love the roses—so do I. I wish

The sky would rain down roses, as they rain
From off the shaken bush. Why will it not?
Then all the valley would be pink and white
And soft to tread on. They would fall as light
As feathers, smelling sweet; and it would be
Like sleeping and yet waking, all at once!
Over the sea, Queen, where we soon shall go,
Will it rain roses?

FEDALMA.

No, my prattler, no!
It never will rain roses: when we want
To have more roses we must plant more trees.
But you want nothing, little one—the world
Just suits you as it suits the tawny squirrels.
Come, you want nothing.

HINDA.

Yes, I want more berries—
Red ones—to wind about my neck and arms
When I am married—on my ankles, too,
I want to wind red berries, and on my head.

FEDALMA.

Who is it you are fond of? Tell me, now.

HINDA.

O Queen, you know! It could be no one else
But Ismaël. He catches all the birds,
Knows where the speckled fish are, scales the rocks,
And sings and dances with me when I like.
How should I marry and not marry him?

FEDALMA.

Should you have loved him, had he been a Moor,
Or white Castilian?

HINDA (*starting to her feet, then kneeling again*).

Are you angry, queen?
Say why you will think shame of your poor Hinda?
She'd sooner be a rat and hang on thorns
To parch until the wind had scattered her,
Than be an outcast, spit at by her tribe,

FEDALMA.

I think no evil—am not angry, child.
But would you part from Ismaël? Leave him now
If your chief bade you—said it was for good
To all your tribe that you must part from him?

HINDA (*giving a sharp cry*).

Ah, will he say so?

FEDALMA (*almost fierce in her earnestness*).

Nay, child, answer me.
Could you leave Ismaël? get into a boat
And see the waters widen 'twixt you two
Till all was water and you saw him not,
And knew that you would never see him more?
If 'twas your chief's command, and if he said
Your tribe would all be slaughtered, die of plague,
Of famine—madly drink each other's blood——

HINDA (*trembling*).

O Queen, if it is so, tell Ismaël.

FEDALMA.

You would obey, then? part from him forever?

HINDA.

How could we live else? With our brethren lost?
No marriage feast? The day would turn to dark.
A Zincala cannot live without her tribe.
I must obey! Poor Ismaël!—poor Hinda!
But will it ever be so cold and dark?
Oh, I would sit upon the rocks and cry,
And cry so long that I could cry no more:
Then I should go to sleep.

FEDALMA.

No, Hinda, no!
Thou never shalt be called to part from him.
I will have berries for thee, red and black,
And I will be so glad to see thee glad,
That earth will seem to hold enough of joy
To outweigh all the pangs of those who part.

Be comforted, bright eyes. See, I will tie
These roses in a crown, for thee to wear.

HINDA (*clapping her hands, while* FEDALMA *puts the roses on her head*).

Oh, I'm as glad as many little foxes—
I will find Ismaël, and tell him all.

(*She runs off.*)

FEDALMA (*alone*).

She has the strength I lack. Within her world
The dial has not stirred since first she woke:
No changing light has made the shadows die,
And taught her trusting soul sad difference.
For her, good, right, and law are all summed up
In what is possible: life is one web
Where love, joy, kindred, and obedience
Lie fast and even, in one warp and woof
With thirst and drinking, hunger, food, and sleep.
She knows no struggles, sees no double path:
Her fate is freedom, for her will is one
With her own people's law, the only law
She ever knew. For me—I have fire within,
But on my will there falls the chilling snow
Of thoughts that come as subtly as soft flakes,
Yet press at last with hard and icy weight.
I could be firm, could give myself the wrench
And walk erect, hiding my life-long wound,
If I but saw the fruit of all my pain
With that strong vision which commands the soul,
And makes great awe the monarch of desire.
But now I totter, seeing no far goal:
I tread the rocky pass, and pause and grasp,
Guided by flashes. When my father comes,
And breathes into my soul his generous hope—
By his own greatness making life seem great,
As the clear heavens bring sublimity,
And show earth larger, spanned by that blue vast—
Resolve is strong: I can embrace my sorrow,
Nor nicely weigh the fruit; possessed with need
Solely to do the noblest, though it failed—
Though lava streamed upon my breathing deed
And buried it in night and barrenness.
But soon the glow dies out, the trumpet strain

That vibrated as strength through all my limbs
Is heard no longer; over the wide scene
There's naught but chill gray silence, or the hum
And fitful discord of a vulgar world.
Then I sink helpless—sink into the arms
Of all sweet memories, and dream of bliss:
See looks that penetrate like tones; hear tones
That flash looks with them. Even now I feel
Soft airs enwrap me, as if yearning rays
Of some soft presence touched me with their warmth
And brought a tender murmuring——

[While she mused,
A figure came from out the olive trees
That bent close-whispering 'twixt the parted hills
Beyond the crescent of thick cactus: paused
At sight of her; then slowly forward moved
With careful steps, and gently said, "FEDALMA!"
Fearing lest fancy had enslaved her sense,
She quivered, rose, but turned not. Soon again:
"FEDALMA, it is SILVA!" Then she turned.
He, with bared head and arms entreating, beamed
Like morning on her. Vision held her still
One moment, then with gliding motion swift,
Inevitable as the melting stream's,
She found her rest within his circling arms.]

FEDALMA.

O love, you are living, and believe in me!

DON SILVA.

Once more we are together. Wishing dies—
Stifled with bliss.

FEDALMA.

You did not hate me, then—
Think me an ingrate—think my love was small
That I forsook you?

DON SILVA.

Dear, I trusted you
As holy men trust God. You could do naught
That was not pure and loving—though the deed

Might pierce me unto death. You had less trust,
Since you suspected mine. 'Twas wicked doubt.

FEDALMA.

Nay, when I saw you hating me, the fault
Seemed in my lot—my bitter birthright—hers
On whom you lavished all your wealth of love
As price of naught but sorrow. Then I said,
"'Tis better so. He will be happier!"
But soon that thought, struggling to be a hope,
Would end in tears.

DON SILVA.

It was a cruel thought.
Happier! True misery is not begun
Until I cease to love thee.

FEDALMA.

Silva!

DON SILVA.

Mine!

(*They stand a moment or two in silence.*)

FEDALMA.

I thought I had so much to tell you, love—
Long eloquent stories—how it all befell—
The solemn message, calling me away
To awful spousals, where my own dead joy,
A conscious ghost, looked on and saw me wed.

DON SILVA.

Oh, that grave speech would cumber our quick souls
Like bells that waste the moments with their loudness.

FEDALMA.

And if it all were said, 'twould end in this,
That I still loved you when I fled away.
'Tis no more wisdom than the little birds
Make known by their soft twitter when they feel
Each other's heart beat.

DON SILVA.

All the deepest things
We now say with our eyes and meeting pulse;
Our voices need but prattle.

FEDALMA.

I forget
All the drear days of thirst in this one draught.

(*Again they are silent for a few moments.*)

But tell me how you came? Where are your guards?
Is there no risk? And now I look at you,
This garb is strange——

DON SILVA.

I came alone

FEDALMA.

Alone?

DON SILVA.

Yes—fled in secret. There was no way else
To find you safely.

FEDALMA (*letting one hand fall and moving a little from him with a look of sudden terror, while he clasps her more firmly by the other arm*).

Silva!

DON SILVA.

It is naught.
Enough that I am here. Now we will cling.
What power shall hinder us? You left me once
To set your father free. That task is done,
And you are mine again. I have braved all
That I might find you, see your father, win
His furtherance in bearing you away
To some safe refuge. Are we not betrothed?

FEDALMA.

Oh, I am trembling 'neath the rush of thoughts

That come like griefs at morning—look at me
With awful faces, from the vanishing haze
That momently had hidden them.

DON SILVA.

What thoughts?

FEDALMA.

Forgotten burials. There lies a grave
Between this visionary present and the past.
Our joy is dead, and only smiles on us
A loving shade from out the place of tombs.

DON SILVA.

Your love is faint, else aught that parted us
Would seem but superstition. Love supreme
Defies dream-terrors—risks avenging fires.
I have risked all things. But your love is faint.

FEDALMA (*retreating a little, but keeping his hand*).

Silva, if now between us came a sword,
Severed my arm, and left our two hands clasped,
This poor maimed arm would feel the clasp till death.
What parts us is a sword ——

(ZARCA *has been advancing in the background. He has drawn his sword, and now thrusts the naked blade between them.* DON SILVA *lets go* FEDALMA'S *hand, and grasps his sword.* FEDALMA, *startled at first, stands firmly, as if prepared to interpose between her Father and the Duke.*)

ZARCA.

Ay, 'tis a sword
That parts the Spaniard and the Zíncala:
A sword that was baptized in Christian blood,
When once a band, cloaking with Spanish law
Their brutal rapine, would have butchered us,
And outraged then our women.

(*Resting the point of his sword on the ground.*)

My lord Duke,
I was a guest within your fortress once

Against my will; had entertainment too—
Much like a galley-slave's. Pray, have you sought
The Zincala's camp to find a fit return
For that Castilian courtesy? or rather
To make amends for all our prisoned toil
By free bestowal of your presence here?

DON SILVA.

Chief, I have brought no scorn to meet your scorn.
I came because love urged me—that deep love
I bear to her whom you call daughter—her
Whom I reclaim as my betrothèd bride.

ZARCA.

Doubtless you bring for final argument
Your men-at-arms who will escort your bride?

DON SILVA.

I came alone. The only force I bring
Is tenderness. Nay, I will trust besides
In all the pleadings of a father's care
To wed his daughter as her nurture bids.
And for your tribe—whatever purposed good
Your thoughts may cherish, I will make secure
With the strong surety of a noble's power:
My wealth shall be your treasury.

ZARCA (*with irony*).

My thanks!
To me you offer liberal price; for her
Your love's beseeching will be force supreme.
She will go with you as a willing slave,
Will give a word of parting to her father,
Wave farewells to her tribe, then turn and say,
"Now, my lord, I am nothing but your bride;
I am quite culled, have neither root nor trunk,
Now wear me with your plume!"

DON SILVA.

Yours is the wrong
Feigning in me one thought of her below
The highest homage. I would make my rank
The pedestal of her worth; a noble's sword,

A noble's honor, her defense; his love
The life-long sanctuary of her womanhood.

ZARCA.

I tell you, were you King of Aragon,
And won my daughter's hand, your higher rank
Would blacken her dishonor. 'Twere excuse
If you were beggared, homeless, spit upon,
And so made even with her people's lot;
For then she would be lured by want, not wealth,
To be a wife amongst an alien race
To whom her tribe owes curses.

DON SILVA.

Such blind hate
Is fit for beasts of prey, but not for men.
My hostile acts against you, should but count
As ignorant strokes against a friend unknown;
And for the wrongs inflicted on your tribe
By Spanish edicts or the cruelty
Of Spanish vassals, am I criminal?
Love comes to cancel all ancestral hate,
Subdues all heritage, proves that in mankind
Union is deeper than division.

ZARCA.

Ay,
Such love is common: I have seen it oft—
Seen many women rend the sacred ties
That bind them in high fellowship with men,
Making them mothers of a people's virtue:
Seen them so leveled to a handsome steed
That yesterday was Moorish property,
To-day is Christian—wears new-fashioned gear,
Neighs to new feeders, and will prance alike
Under all banners, so the banner be
A master's who caresses. Such light change
You call conversion; but we Zíncali call
Conversion infamy. Our people's faith
Is faithfulness; not the rote-learned belief
That we are heaven's highest favorites,
But the resolve that being most forsaken
Among the sons of men, we will be true
Each to the other, and our common lot.

You Christians burn men for their heresy:
Our vilest heretic is that Zíncala
Who, choosing ease, forsakes her people's woes.
The dowry of my daughter is to be
Chief woman of her tribe, and rescue it.
A bride with such a dowry has no match
Among the subjects of that Catholic Queen
Who would have Gypsies swept into the sea
Or else would have them gibbeted.

DON SILVA.

And you,
Fedalma's father—you who claim the dues
Of fatherhood—will offer up her youth
To mere grim idols of your phantasy!
Worse than all Pagans, with no oracle
To bid you murder, no sure good to win,
Will sacrifice your daughter—to no god,
But to a ravenous fire within your soul,
Mad hopes, blind hate, that like possessing fiends
Shriek at a name! This sweetest virgin, reared
As garden flowers, to give the sordid world
Glimpses of perfectness, you snatch and thrust
On dreary wilds; in visions mad proclaim
Semiramis of Gypsy wanderers;
Doom, with a broken arrow in her heart,
To wait for death 'mid squalid savages:
For what? You would be savior of your tribe;
So said Fedalma's letter; rather say,
You have the will to save by ruling men,
But first to rule; and with that flinty will
You cut your way, though the first cut you give
Gash your child's bosom.

(*While* DON SILVA *has been speaking, with growing passion,* FEDALMA *has placed herself between him and her father.*)

ZARCA (*with calm irony*).

You are loud, my lord!
You only are the reasonable man;
You have a heart, I none. Fedalma's good
Is what you see, you care for; while I seek
No good, not even my own, urged on by naught
But hellish hunger, which must still be fed

Though in the feeding it I suffer throes.
Fume at your own opinion as you will:
I speak not now to you, but to my daughter.
If she still calls it good to mate with you,
To be a Spanish duchess, kneel at court,
And hope her beauty is excuse to men
When women whisper, "A mere Zíncala!"
If she still calls it good to take a lot
That measures joy for her as she forgets
Her kindred and her kindred's misery,
Nor feels the softness of her downy couch
Marred by remembrance that she once forsook
The place that she was born to—let her go!
If life for her still lies in alien love,
That forces her to shut her soul from truth
As men in shameful pleasures shut out day;
And death, for her, is to do rarest deeds,
Which, even failing, leave new faith to men,
The faith in human hearts—then let her go!
She is my only offspring; in her veins
She bears the blood her tribe has trusted in;
Her heritage is their obedience,
And if I died she might still lead them forth
To plant the race her lover now reviles
Where they may make a nation, and may rise
To grander manhood than his race can show;
Then live a goddess sanctifying oaths,
Enforcing right, and ruling consciences,
By law deep-graven in exalting deeds,
Through the long ages of her people's life.
If she can leave that lot for silken shame,
For kisses honeyed by oblivion—
The bliss of drunkards or the blank of fools—
Then let her go! You Spanish Catholics,
When you are cruel, base and treacherous,
For ends not pious, tender gifts to God,
And for men's wounds offer much oil to churches:
We have no altars for such healing gifts
As soothe the heavens for outrage done on earth.
We have no priesthood and no creed to teach
That she—the Zíncala—who might save her race
And yet abandons it, may cleanse that blot,
And mend the curse her life has been to men,
By saving her own soul. Her one base choice
Is wrong unchangeable, is poison shed

Where men must drink, shed by her poisoning will.
Now choose, Fedalma!

[But her choice was made.
Slowly, while yet her father spoke, she moved
From where oblique with deprecating arms
She stood between the two who swayed her heart:
Slowly she moved to choose sublimer pain;
Yearning, yet shrinking; wrought upon by awe,
Her own brief life seeming a little isle
Remote through visions of a wider world
With fates close-crowded; firm to slay her joy
That cut her heart with smiles beneath the knife,
Like a sweet babe foredoomed by prophecy.
She stood apart, yet near her father: stood
Hand clutching hand, her limbs all tense with will
That strove 'gainst anguish, eyes that seemed a soul
Yearning in death toward him she loved and left.
He faced her, pale with passion and a will
Fierce to resist whatever might seem strong
And ask him to submit: he saw one end—
He must be conqueror; monarch of his lot
And not its tributary. But she spoke
Tenderly, pleadingly.]

FEDALMA.

My lord, farewell!
'Twas well we met once more; now we must part.
I think we had the chief of all love's joys
Only in knowing that we loved each other.

DON SILVA.

I thought we loved with love that clings till death,
Clings as brute mothers bleeding to their young,
Still sheltering, clutching it, though it were dead;
Taking the death-wound sooner than divide.
I thought we loved so.

FEDALMA.

Silva, it is fate.
Great Fate has made me heiress of this woe.
You must forgive Fedalma all her debt:
She is quite beggared: if she gave herself
'Twould be a self corrupt with stifled thoughts

Of a forsaken better. It is truth
My father speaks: the Spanish noble's wife
Were a false Zíncala. No! I will bear
The heavy trust of my inheritance.
See, 'twas my people's life that throbbed in me:
An unknown need stirred darkly in my soul,
And made me restless even in my bliss.
Oh, all my bliss was in our love; but now
I may not taste it: some deep energy
Compels me to choose hunger. Dear, farewell!
I must go with my people.

[She stretched forth
Her tender hands, that oft had lain in his,
The hands he knew so well, that sight of them
Seemed like their touch. But he stood still as death;
Locked motionless by forces opposite:
His frustrate hopes still battled with despair;
His will was prisoner to the double grasp
Of rage and hesitancy. All the way
Behind him he had trodden confident,
Ruling munificently in his thought
This Gypsy father. Now the father stood
Present and silent and unchangeable
As a celestial portent. Backward lay
The traversed road, the town's forsaken wall
The risk, the daring; all around him now
Was obstacle, save where the rising flood
Of love close pressed by anguish of denial
Was sweeping him resistless; save where she
Gazing stretched forth her tender hands, that hurt
Like parting kisses. Then at last he spoke.]

DON SILVA.

No, I can never take those hands in mine.
Then let them go forever!

FEDALMA.

It must be.
We may not make this world a paradise
By walking it together hand in hand,
With eyes that meeting feed a double strength
We must be only joined by pains divine

Of spirits blent in mutual memories.
Silva, our joy is dead.

DON SILVA.

But love still lives,
And has a safer guard in wretchedness.
Fedalma, women know no perfect love:
Loving the strong, they can forsake the strong:
Man clings because the being whom he loves
Is weak and needs him. I can never turn
And leave you to your difficult wandering;
Know that you tread the desert, bear the storm,
Shed tears, see terrors, faint with weariness,
Yet live away from you. I should feel naught
But your imagined pains: in my own steps
See your feet bleeding, taste your silent tears,
And feel no presence but your loneliness.
No, I will never leave you!

ZARCA.

My lord Duke,
I have been patient, given room for speech,
Bent not to move my daughter by command,
Save that of her own faithfulness. But now,
All further words are idle elegies
Unfitting times of action. You are here
With the safe-conduct of that trust you showed
Coming unguarded to the Gypsy's camp.
I would fain meet all trust with courtesy
As well as honor; but my utmost power
Is to afford you Gypsy guard to-night
Within the tents that keep the northward lines,
And for the morrow, escort on your way
Back to the Moorish bounds.

DON SILVA.

What if my words
Were meant for deeds, decisive as a leap
Into the current? It is not my wont
To utter hollow words, and speak resolves
Like verses bandied in a madrigal.
I spoke in action first: I faced all risks
To find Fedalma. Action speaks again

When I, a Spanish noble, here declare
That I abide with her, adopt her lot,
Claiming alone fulfillment of her vows
As my betrothèd wife.

FEDALMA (*wresting herself from him, and standing opposite with a look of terror*).

Nay, Silva, nay!
You could not live so—spring from your high place—

DON SILVA.

Yes, I have said it. And you, chief, are bound
By her strict vows, no stronger fealty
Being left to cancel them.

ZARCA.

Strong words, my lord!
Sounds fatal as the hammer-strokes that shape
The glowing metal: they must shape your life.
That you will claim my daughter is to say
That you will leave your Spanish dignities,
Your home, your wealth, your people, to become
Wholly a Zincala: share our wanderings,
And be a match meet for my daughter's dower
By living for her tribe; take the deep oath
That binds you to us; rest within our camp,
Nevermore hold command of Spanish men,
And keep my orders. See, my lord, you lock
A many-winding chain—a heavy chain.

DON SILVA.

I have but one resolve: let the rest follow.
What is my rank? To-morrow it will be filled
By one who eyes it like a carrion bird,
Waiting for death. I shall be no more missed
Than waves are missed that leaping on the rock
Find there a bed and rest. Life's a vast sea
That does its mighty errand without fail,
Panting in unchanged strength though waves are changing.
And I have said it: she shall be my people,
And where she gives her life I will give mine.
She shall not live alone, nor die alone.

I will elect my deeds! and be the liege
Not of my birth, but of that good alone
I have discerned and chosen.

ZARCA.

Our poor faith
Allows not rightful choice, save of the right
Our birth has made for us. And you, my lord,
Can still defer your choice, for some days' space.
I march perforce to-night; you, if you will,
Under a Gypsy guard, can keep the heights
With silent Time that slowly opes the scroll
Of change inevitable—take no oath
Till my accomplished task leave me at large
To see you keep your purpose or renounce it.

DON SILVA.

Chief, do I hear amiss, or does your speech
Ring with a doubleness which I had held
Most alien to you? You would put me off,
And cloak evasion with allowance? No!
We will complete our pledges. I will take
That oath which binds not me alone, but you,
To join my life forever with Fedalma's.

ZARCA.

I wrangle not—time presses. But the oath
Will leave you that same post upon the heights;
Pledged to remain there while my absence lasts.
You are agreed, my lord?

DON SILVA.

Agreed to all.

ZARCA.

Then I will give the summons to our camp.
We will adopt you as a brother now,
After our wonted fashion.

[*Exit* ZARCA.]

(SILVA *takes* FEDALMA'S *hands.*)

FEDALMA.

O my lord!

I think the earth is trembling: naught is firm.
Some terror chills me with a shadowy grasp.
Am I about to wake, or do you breathe
Here in this valley? Did the outer air
Vibrate to fatal words, or did they shake
Only my dreaming soul? You—join—our tribe?

DON SILVA.

Is then your love too faint to raise belief
Up to that height?

FEDALMA.

Silva, had you but said
That you would die—that were an easy task
For you who oft have fronted death in war.
But so to live for me—you, used to rule—
You could not breathe the air my father breathes:
His presence is subjection. Go, my lord!
Fly, while there yet is time. Wait not to speak.
I will declare that I refused your love—
Would keep no vows to you——

DON SILVA.

It is too late.
You shall not thrust me back to seek a good
Apart from you. And what good? Why, to face
Your absence—all the want that drove me forth—
To work the will of a more tyrannous friend
Than any uncowled father. Life at least
Gives choice of ills; forces me to defy,
But shall not force me to a weak defiance.
The power that threatened you, to master me,
That scorches like a cave-hid dragon's breath,
Sure of its victory in spite of hate,
Is what I last will bend to—most defy.
Your father has a chieftain's ends, befitting
A soldier's eye and arm: were he as strong
As the Moor's prophet, yet the prophet too
Had younger captains of illustrious fame
Among the infidels. Let him command,
For when your father speaks, I shall hear you.
Life were no gain if you were lost to me:
I would straight go and seek the Moorish walls,
Challenge their bravest and embrace swift death.

The Glorious Mother and her pitying Son
Are not Inquisitors, else their heaven were hell.
Perhaps they hate their cruel worshipers,
And let them feed on lies. I'll rather trust
They love you and have sent me to defend you.

FEDALMA.

I made my creed so, just to suit my mood
And smooth all hardship, till my father came
And taught my soul by ruling it. Since then
I cannot weave a dreaming happy creed
Where our love's happiness is not accursed.
My father shook my soul awake. And you—
The bonds Fedalma may not break for you,
I cannot joy that you should break for her.

DON SILVA.

Oh, Spanish men are not a petty band
Where one deserter makes a fatal breach.
Men, even nobles, are more plenteous
Than steeds and armor; and my weapons left
Will find new hands to wield them. Arrogance
Makes itself champion of mankind, and holds
God's purpose maimed for one hidalgo lost.

See where your father comes and brings a crowd
Of witnesses to hear my oath of love;
The low red sun glows on them like a fire.
This seems a valley in some strange new world,
Where we have found each other, my Fedalma.

BOOK IV.

Now twice the day had sunk from off the hills
While Silva kept his watch there, with the band
Of stalwart Gypsies. When the sun was high
He slept; then, waking, strained impatient eyes
To catch the promise of some moving form
That might be Juan—Juan who went and came
To soothe two hearts, and claimed naught for his own:
Friend more divine than all divinities,

Quenching his human thirst in others' joy.
All through the lingering nights and pale chill dawns
Juan had hovered near; with delicate sense,
As of some breath from every changing mood,
Had spoken or kept silence; touched his lute
To hint of melody, or poured brief strains
That seemed to make all sorrows natural,
Hardly worth weeping for, since life was short,
And shared by loving souls. Such pity welled
Within the minstrel's heart of light-tongued Juan
For this doomed man, who with dream-shrouded eyes
Had stepped into a torrent as a brook,
Thinking to ford it and return at will.
And now waked helpless in the eddying flood,
Hemmed by its raging hurry. Once that thought,
How easy wandering is, how hard and strict
The homeward way, had slipped from reverie
Into low-murmured song—(brief Spanish song
'Scaped him as sighs escape from other men):

Push off the boat,
Quit, quit the shore,
The stars will guide us back:—
O gathering cloud,
O wide, wide sea,
O waves that keep no track!

On through the pines!
The pillared woods,
Where silence breathes sweet breath:—
O labyrinth,
O sunless gloom,
The other side of death!

Such plaintive song had seemed to please the Duke—
Had seemed to melt all voices of reproach
To sympathetic sadness; but his moods
Had grown more fitful with the growing hours,
And this soft murmur had the iterant voice
Of heartless Echo, whom no pain can move
To say aught else than we have said to her.
He spoke, impatient: "Juan, cease thy song.
Our whimpering poesy and small-paced tunes
Have no more utterance than the cricket's chirp
For souls that carry heaven and hell within."

Then Juan, lightly: "True, my lord, I chirp
For lack of soul; some hungry poets chirp
For lack of bread. 'Twere wiser to sit down
And count the star-seed, till I fell asleep
With the cheap wine of pure stupidity."
And Silva checked by courtesy: "Nay, Juan,
Were speech once good, thy song were best of speech.
I meant, all life is but poor mockery;
Action, place, power, the visible, wide world
Are tattered masquerading of this self,
This pulse of conscious mystery; all change,
Whether to high or low, is change of rags.
But for her love, I would not take a good
Save to burn out in battle, in a flame
Of madness that would feel no mangled limbs,
And die not knowing death, but passing straight
—Well, well, to other flames—in purgatory."
Keen Juan's ear caught the self-discontent
That vibrated beneath the changing tones
Of life-contemning scorn. Gently he said:
"But *with* her love, my lord, the world deserves
A higher rate; were it but masquerade,
The rags were surely worth the wearing?" "Yes.
No misery shall force me to repent
That I have loved her."
So with willful talk,
Fencing the wounded soul from beating winds
Of truth that came unasked, companionship
Made the hours lighter. And the Gypsy guard,
Trusting familiar Juan, were content,
At friendly hint from him, to still their songs
And busy jargon round the nightly fires.
Such sounds, the quick-conceiving poet knew
Would strike on Silva's agitated soul
Like mocking repetition of the oath
That bound him in strange clanship with the tribe
Of human panthers, flame-eyed, lithe-limbed, fierce,
Unrecking of time-woven subtleties
And high tribunals of a phantom-world.

But the third day, though Silva southward gazed
Till all the shadows slanted toward him, gazed
Till all the shadows died, no Juan came.
Now in his stead came loneliness, and Thought
Inexorable, fastening with firm chain

What is to what hath been. Now awful Night,
The prime ancestral mystery, came down
Past all the generations of the stars,
And visited his soul with touch more close
Than when he kept that younger, briefer watch
Under the church's roof beside his arms,
And won his knighthood.
Well, this solitude
This company with the enduring universe,
Whose mighty silence carrying all the past
Absorbs our history as with a breath,
Should give him more assurance, make him strong
In all contempt of that poor circumstance
Called human life—customs and bonds and laws
Wherewith men make a better or a worse,
Like children playing on a barren mound
Feigning a thing to strive for or avoid.
Thus Silva argued with his many-voiced self,
Whose thwarted needs, like angry multitudes,
Lured from the home that nurtured them to strength,
Made loud insurgence. Thus he called on Thought,
On dexterous Thought, with its swift alchemy
To change all forms, dissolve all prejudice
Of man's long heritage, and yield him up
A crude fused world to fashion as he would.
Thought played him double; seemed to wear the yoke
Of sovereign passion in the noon-day height
Of passion's prevalence; but served anon
As tribune to the larger soul which brought
Loud-mingled cries from every human need
That ages had instructed into life.
He could not grasp Night's black blank mystery
And wear it for a spiritual garb
Creed-proof: he shuddered at its passionless touch.
On solitary souls, the universe
Looks down inhospitable; the human heart
Finds nowhere shelter but in human kind.
He yearned toward images that had breath in them,
That sprang warm palpitant with memories
From streets and altars, from ancestral homes
Banners and trophies and the cherishing rays
Of shame and honor in the eyes of man.
These made the speech articulate of his soul,
That could not move to utterance of scorn
Save in words bred by fellowship; could not feel

Resolve of hardest constancy to love
The firmer for the sorrows of the loved,
Save by concurrent energies high-wrought
To sensibilities transcending sense
Through close community, and long-shared pains
Of far-off generations. All in vain
He sought the outlaw's strength, and made a right
Contemning that hereditary right
Which held dim habitations in his frame
Mysterious haunts of echoes old and far,
The voice divine of human loyalty.
At home, among his people, he had played
In skeptic ease with saints and litanies,
And thunders of the church that deadened fell
Through screens of priests plethoric. Awe, unscathed
By deeper trespass, slept without a dream.
But for such trespass as made outcasts, still
The ancient furies lived with faces new
And lurked with lighter slumber than of old
O'er Catholic Spain, the land of sacred oaths
That might be broken.
Now the former life
Of close-linked fellowship, the life that made
His full-formed self, as the impregnate sap
Of years successive frames the full-branched tree—
Was present in one whole; and that great trust
His deed had broken turned reproach on him
From faces of all witnesses who heard
His uttered pledges; saw him hold high place
Centring reliance; use rich privilege
That bound him like a victim-nourished god
By tacit covenant to shield and bless;
Assume the cross and take his knightly oath
Mature, deliberate; faces human all,
And some divine as well as human; His
Who hung supreme, the suffering Man divine
Above the altar; Hers, the Mother pure
Whose glance informed his masculine tenderness
With deepest reverence; the archangel armed,
Trampling man's enemy; all heroic forms
That fill the world of faith with voices, hearts,
And high companionship, to Silva now
Made but one inward and insistent world
With faces of his peers, with court and hall
And deference, and reverent vassalage,

And filial pieties—one current strong,
The warmly mingled life-blood of his mind,
Sustaining him even when he idly played
With rules, beliefs, charges, and ceremonies
As arbitrary fooling. Such revenge
Is wrought by the long travail of mankind
On him who scorns it, and would shape his life
Without obedience.
But his warrior's pride
Would take no wounds save on the breast. He faced
The fatal crowd: "I never shall repent!
If I have sinned, my sin was made for me
By men's perverseness. There's no blameless life
Save for the passionless, no sanctities
But have the self-same roof and props with crime,
Or have their roots close interlaced with wrong.
If I had loved her less, been more a craven,
I had kept my place and won the easy praise
Of a true Spanish noble. But I loved,
And, loving, dared—not Death the warrior
But Infamy that binds and strips, and holds
The brand and lash. I have dared all for her.
She was my good—what other men call heaven,
And for the sake of it bear penances;
Nay, some of old were baited, tortured, flayed
To win their heaven. Heaven was their good,
She, mine. And I have braved for her all fires
Certain or threatened; for I go away
Beyond the reach of expiation—far away
From sacramental blessing. Does God bless
No outlaw? Shut his absolution fast
In human breath? Is there no God for me
Save him whose cross I have forsaken?—Well,
I am forever exiled—but with her!
She is dragged out into the wilderness;
I, with my love, will be her providence.
I have a right to choose my good or ill,
A right to damn myself! The ill is mine.
I never will repent!" * * *
Thus Silva, inwardly debating, all his ear
Turned into audience of a twofold mind;
For even in tumult full-fraught consciousness
Had plenteous being for a self aloof
That gazed and listened, like a soul in dreams
Weaving the wondrous tale it marvels at,

But oft the conflict slackened, oft strong love
With tidal energy returning laid
All other restlessness; Fedalma came,
And with her visionary presence brought
What seemed a waking in the warm spring morn.
He still was pacing on the stony earth
Under the deepening night; the fresh-lit fires
Were flickering on dark forms and eyes that met
His forward and his backward tread; but she,
She was within him, making his whole self
Mere correspondence with her image; sense,
In all its deep recesses where it keeps
The mystic stores of ecstasy, was turned
To memory that killed the hour, like wine.
Then Silva said, "She, by herself, is life.
What was my joy before I loved her—what
Shall heaven lure us with, love being lost?"—
For he was young.
But now around the fires
The Gypsy band felt freer; Juan's song
Was no more there, nor Juan's friendly ways
For links of amity 'twixt their wild mood
And this strange brother, this pale Spanish duke,
Who with their Gypsy badge upon his breast
Took readier place within their alien hearts
As a marked captive, who would fain escape.
And Nadar, who commanded them, had known
The prison in Bedmár. So now, in talk
Foreign to Spanish ears, they said their minds,
Discussed their chief's intent, the lot marked out
For this new brother. Would he wed their queen?
And some denied, saying their queen would wed
Only a Gypsy duke—one who would join
Their bands in Telemsán. But others thought
Young Hassan was to wed her; said their chief
Would never trust this noble of Castile,
Who in his very swearing was forsworn.
And then one fell to chanting, in wild notes
Recurrent like the moan of outshut winds,
The adjuration they were wont to use
To any Spaniard who would join their tribe:
Words of plain Spanish, lately stirred anew
And ready at new impulse. Soon the rest,
Drawn to the stream of sound, made unison
Higher and lower, till the tidal sweep

Seemed to assail the Duke and close him round
With force dæmonic. All debate till now
Had wrestled with the urgence of that oath
Already broken; now the newer oath
Thrust its loud presence on him. He stood still,
Close bated by loud-barking thoughts—fierce hounds
Of that Supreme, the irreversible Past.

The ZÍNCALI *sing.*

Brother, hear and take the curse,
Curse of soul's and body's throes,
If you hate not all our foes,
Cling not fast to all our woes,
Turn false Zíncalo!

May you be accurst
By hunger and by thirst
By spikèd pangs,
Starvation's fangs
Clutching you alone
When none but peering vultures hear your moan,
Curst by burning hands,
Curst by aching brow,
When on sea-wide sands
Fever lays you low;
By the maddening brain
When the running water glistens,
And the deaf ear listens, listens,
Prisoned fire within the vein,
On the tongue and on the lip
Not a sip
From the earth or skies;
Hot the desert lies
Pressed into your anguish,
Narrowing earth and narrowing sky
Into lonely misery.
Lonely may you languish
Through the day and through the night,
Hate the darkness, hate the light,
Pray and find no ear,
Feel no brother near
Till on death you cry,
Death who passes by,

And anew you groan,
Scaring the vultures all to leave you living lone:
Curst by soul's and body's throes
If you love the dark men's foes,
Cling not fast to all the dark men's woes,
Turn false Zíncalo!
Swear to hate the cruel cross,
The silver cross!
Glittering, laughing at the blood
Shed below it in a flood
When it glitters over Moorish porches;
Laughing at the scent of flesh
When it glitters where the faggot scorches,
Burning life's mysterious mesh:
Blood of wandering Israël
Blood of wandering Ismaël;
Blood, the drink of Christian scorn,
Blood of wanderers, sons of morn
Where the life of men began:
Swear to hate the cross!—
Sign of all the wanderers' foes,
Sign of all the wanderers' woes—
Else its curse light on you!
Else the curse upon you light
Of its sharp red-sworded might.
May it lie a blood-red blight
On all things within your sight:
On the white haze of the morn,
On the meadows and the corn,
On the sun and on the moon,
On the clearness of the noon,
On the darkness of the night.
May it fill your aching sight—
Red-cross sword and sword blood-red—
Till it press upon your head,
Till it lie within your brain.
Piercing sharp, a cross of pain,
Till it lie upon your heart,
Burning hot, a cross of fire,
Till from sense in every part
Pains have clustered like a stinging swarm
In the cross's form,
And you see naught but the cross of blood,
And you feel naught but the cross of fire;
Curst by all the cross's throes

If you hate not all our foes,
Cling not fast to all our woes,
Turn false Zincalo!

A fierce delight was in the Gypsies' chant;
They thought no more of Silva, only felt
Like those broad-chested rovers of the night
Who pour exuberant strength upon the air.
To him it seemed as if the hellish rhythm,
Revolving in long curves that slackened now,
Now hurried, sweeping round again to slackness,
Would cease no more. What use to raise his voice,
Or grasp his weapon? He was powerless now,
With these new comrades of his future—he
Who had been wont to have his wishes feared
And guessed at as a hidden law for men.
Even the passive silence of the night
That left these howlers mastery, even the moon,
Rising and staring with a helpless face,
Angered him. He was ready now to fly
At some loud throat, and give the signal so
For butchery of himself.

But suddenly
The sounds that traveled toward no foreseen close
Were torn right off and fringed into the night;
Sharp Gypsy ears had caught the onward strain
Of kindred voices joining in the chant.
All started to their feet and mustered close,
Auguring long-waited summons. It was come;
The summons to set forth and join their chief.
Fedalma had been called and she was gone
Under safe escort, Juan following her;
The camp—the women, children, and old men—
Were moving slowly southward on the way
To Almeria. Silva learned no more.
He marched perforce; what other goal was his
Than where Fedalma was? And so he marched
Through the dim passes and o'er rising hills,
Not knowing whither, till the morning came.

The Moorish hall in the castle at Bedmár. The morning twilight dimly shows stains of blood on the white marble floor; yet there has been a careful restoration of order among the sparse objects of furniture. Stretched on mats lie three corpses, the faces bare, the bodies covered with mantles. A little way off, with rolled matting for a pillow, lies ZARCA, *sleeping. His chest and arms are bare; his weapons, turban, mail-shirt and other upper garments lie on the floor beside him. In the outer gallery Zincali are pacing, at intervals, past the arched openings.*

ZARCA (*half rising and resting his elbow on the pillow while he looks round*).

The morning! I have slept for full three hours;
Slept without dreams, save of my daughter's face.
Its sadness waked me. Soon she will be here,
Soon must outlive the worst of all the pains
Bred by false nurture in an alien home—
As if a lion in fangless infancy
Learned love of creatures that with fatal growth
It scents as natural prey, and grasps and tears,
Yet with heart-hunger yearns for, missing them.
She is a lioness. And they—the race
That robbed me of her—reared her to this pain.
He will be crushed and torn. There was no help.
But she, my child, will bear it. For strong souls
Live like fire-hearted suns to spend their strength
In farthest striving action; breathe more free
In mighty anguish than in trivial ease.
Her sad face waked me. I shall meet it soon
Waking——

(*He rises and stands looking at the corpses.*)

As now I look on these pale dead,
These blossoming branches crushed beneath the fall
Of that broad trunk to which I laid my axe
With fullest foresight. So will I ever face
In thought beforehand to its utmost reach
The consequences of my conscious deeds;
So face them after, bring them to my bed,
And never drug my soul to sleep with lies.
If they are cruel, they shall be arraigned
By that true name; they shall be justified
By my high purpose, by the clear-seen good

That grew into my vision as I grew,
And makes my nature's function, the full pulse
Of inbred kingship. Catholics,
Arabs and Hebrews, have their god apiece
To fight and conquer for them, or be bruised,
Like Allah now, yet keep avenging stores
Of patient wrath. The Zincali have no god
Who speaks to them and calls them his, unless
I, Zarca, carry living in my frame
The power divine that chooses them and saves.
"Life and more life unto the chosen, death
To all things living that would stifle them!"
So speaks each god that makes a nation strong;
Burns trees and brutes and slays all hindering men.
The Spaniards boast their god the strongest now;
They win most towns by treachery, make most slaves,
Burn the most vines and men, and rob the most.
I fight against that strength, and in my turn
Slay these brave young who duteously strove.
Cruel? aye, it is cruel. But, how else?
To save, we kill; each blow we strike at guilt
Hurts innocence with its shock. Men might well seek.
For purifying rites; even pious deeds
Need washing. But my cleansing waters flow
Solely from my intent.

(*He turns away from the bodies to where his garments lie, but does not lift them.*)

And she must suffer!
But she has seen the unchangeable and bowed
Her head beneath the yoke. And she will walk
No more in chilling twilight, for to-day
Rises our sun. The difficult night is past;
We keep the bridge no more, but cross it; march
Forth to a land where all our wars shall be
With greedy obstinate plants that will not yield
Fruit for their nurture. All our race shall come
From north, west, east, a kindred multitude,
And make large fellowship, and raise inspired
The shout divine, the unison of resolve.
So I, so she, will see our race redeemed.
And their keen love of family and tribe
Shall no more thrive on cunning, hide and lurk
In petty arts of abject hunted life,

But grow heroic in the sanctioning light,
And feed with ardent blood a nation's heart.
That is my work; and it is well begun.
On to achievement!

(*He takes up the mail-shirt, and looks at it, then throws it down again.*)

No, I'll none of you!
To-day there'll be no fighting. A few hours,
And I shall doff these garments of the Moor;
Till then I will walk lightly and breathe high.

SEPHARDO (*appearing at the archway leading into the outer gallery*).

You bade me wake you——

ZARCA.

Welcome, Doctor; see,
With that small task I did but beckon you
To graver work. You know these corpses?

SEPHARDO.

Yes.
I would they were not corpses. Storms will lay
The fairest trees and leave the withered stumps.
This Alvar and the Duke were of one age,
And very loving friends. I minded not
The sight of Don Diego's corpse, for death
Gave him some gentleness, and had he lived
I had still hated him. But this young Alvar
Was doubly noble, as a gem that holds
Rare virtues in its lustre; and his death
Will pierce Don Silva with a poisoned dart.
This fair and curly youth was Arias,
A son of the Pachecos: this dark face——

ZARCA.

Enough! you know their names. I had divined
That they were near the Duke, most like had served
My daughter, were her friends; so rescued them
From being flung upon the heap of slain.
Beseech you, Doctor, if you owe me aught

As having served your people, take the pains
To see these bodies buried decently.
And let their names be writ above their graves,
As those of brave young Spaniards who died well.
I needs must bear this womanhood in my heart—
Bearing my daughter there. For once she prayed—
'Twas at our parting—"When you see fair hair
Be pitiful." And I am forced to look
On fair heads living and be pitiless.
Your service, Doctor, will be done to her.

SEPHARDO.

A service doubly dear. For these young dead,
And one less happy Spaniard who still lives,
Are offerings which I wrenched from out my heart,
Constrained by cries of Israel: while my hands
Rendered the victims at command, my eyes
Closed themselves vainly, as if vision lay
Through those poor loopholes only. I will go
And see the graves dug by some cypresses.

ZARCA.

Meanwhile the bodies shall rest here. Farewell.

(*Exit* SEPHARDO.)

Nay, 'tis no mockery. She keeps me so
From hardening with the hardness of my acts.
This Spaniard shrouded in her love—I would
He lay here too that I might pity him.

Morning.—The Plaça Santiago in Bedmár. A crowd of townsmen forming an outer circle: within, Zincali and Moorish soldiers drawn up round the central space. On the higher ground in front of the church a stake with faggots heaped, and at a little distance a gibbet. Moorish music. ZARCA *enters, wearing his gold necklace with the Gypsy badge of the flaming torch over the dress of a Moorish captain, accompanied by a small band of armed Zincali, who fall aside and range themselves with the other soldiers while he takes his stand in front of the stake and gibbet. The music ceases, and there is expectant silence.*

ZARCA.

Men of Bedmár, well-wishers, and allies,
Whether of Moorish or of Hebrew blood,
Who, being galled by the hard Spaniard's yoke,
Have welcomed our quick conquest as release,
I, Zarca, chief of Spanish gypsies, hold
By delegation of the Moorish king
Supreme command within this town and fort.
Nor will I, with false show of modesty,
Profess myself unworthy of this post.
For so I should but tax the giver's choice.
And, as ye know, while I was prisoner here,
Forging the bullets meant for Moorish hearts,
But likely now to reach another mark,
I learned the secrets of the town's defense,
Caught the loud whispers of your discontent,
And so could serve the purpose of the Moor
As the edge's keenness serves the weapon's weight.
My Zíncali, lynx-eyed and lithe of limb,
Tracked out the high Sierra's hidden path,
Guided the hard ascent, and were the first
To scale the walls and brave the showering stones.
In brief, I reached this rank through service done
By thought of mine and valor of my tribe,
Yet hold it but in trust, with readiness
To lay it down; for we—the Zíncali—
Will never pitch our tents again on land
The Spaniard grudges us; we seek a home
Where we may spread and ripen like the corn
By blessing of the sun and spacious earth.
Ye wish us well, I think, and are our friends?

CROWD.

Long life to Zarca and his Zíncali!

ZARCA.

Now, for the cause of our assembling here.
'Twas my command that rescued from your hands
That Spanish prior and inquisitor
Whom in fierce retribution you had bound
And meant to burn, tied to a planted cross.
I rescued him with promise that his death
Should be more signal in its justice—made

Public in fullest sense, and orderly.
Here, then, you see the stake—slow death by fire;
And there a gibbet—swift death by the cord.
Now hear me, Moors and Hebrews of Bedmár,
Our kindred by the warmth of eastern blood!
Punishing cruel wrong by cruelty
We copy Christian crime. Vengeance is just;
Justly we rid the earth of human fiends
Who carry hell for pattern in their souls.
But in high vengeance there is noble scorn;
It tortures not the torturer, nor gives
Iniquitous payment for iniquity.
The great avenging angel does not crawl
To kill the serpent with a mimic fang;
He stands erect with sword of keenest edge
That slays like lightning. So, too, we will slay
The cruel man; slay him because he works
Woe to mankind. And I have given command
To pile these faggots, not to burn quick flesh,
But for a sign of that dire wrong to men
Which arms our wrath with justice. While, to show
This Christian worshiper that we obey
A better law than his, he shall be led
Straight to the gibbet and to swiftest death.
For I, the chieftain of the Gypsies, will,
My people shed no blood but what is shed
In heat of battle or in judgment strict
With calm deliberation on the right.
Such is my will, and if it please you—well.

CROWD.

It pleases us. Long life to Zarca!

ZARCA.

Hark!
The bell is striking, and they bring even now
The prisoner from the fort. What, Nadar?

NADAR (*has appeared, cutting the crowd, and advancing toward* ZARCA *till he is near enough to speak in an undertone*).

Chief,
I have obeyed your word, have followed it
As water does the furrow in the rock.

ZARCA.

Your band is here?

NADAR.

Yes, and the Spaniard too.

ZARCA.

'Twas so I ordered.

NADAR.

Ay, but this sleek hound,
Who slipped his collar off to join the wolves,
Has still a heart for none but kenneled brutes.
He rages at the taking of the town,
Says all his friends are butchered; and one corpse
He stumbled on—well, I would sooner be
A murdered Gypsy's dog, and howl for him,
Than be this Spaniard. Rage has made him whiter.
One townsman taunted him with his escape,
And thanked him for so favoring us——

ZARCA.

Enough.
You gave him my command that he should wait
Within the castle, till I saw him?

NADAR.

Yes.
But he defied me, broke away, ran loose
I know not whither; he may soon be here.
I came to warn you, lest he work us harm.

ZARCA.

Fear not, I know the road I travel by:
Its turns are no surprises. He who rules
Must humor full as much as he commands;
Must let men vow impossibilities;
Grant folly's prayers that hinder folly's wish
And serve the ends of wisdom. Ah, he comes!

[Sweeping like some pale herald from the dead,
Whose shadow-nurtured eyes, dazed by full light,
See naught without, but give reverted sense

To the soul's imagery, Silva came,
The wondering people parting wide to get
Continuous sight of him as he passed on—
This high hidalgo, who through blooming years
Had shone on men with planetary calm,
Believed-in with all sacred images
And saints that must be taken as they were,
Though rendering meagre service for men's praise:
Bareheaded now, carrying an unsheathed sword,
And on his breast, where late he bore the cross,
Wearing the Gypsy badge; his form aslant,
Driven, it seemed, by some invisible chase,
Right to the front of Zarca. There he paused.]

DON SILVA.

Chief, you are treacherous, cruel, devilish!—
Relentless as a curse that once let loose
From lips of wrath, lives bodiless to destroy,
And darkly traps a man in nets of guilt
Which could not weave themselves in open day
Before his eyes. Oh, it was bitter wrong
To hold this knowledge locked within your mind,
To stand with waking eyes in broadest light,
And see me, dreaming, shed my kindred's blood.
'Tis horrible that men with hearts and hands
Should smile in silence like the firmament
And see a fellow-mortal draw a lot
On which themselves have written agony!
Such injury has no redress, no healing
Save what may lie in stemming further ill.
Poor balm for maiming! Yet I come to claim it.

ZARCA.

First prove your wrongs, and I will hear your claim.
Mind, you are not commander of Bedmár,
Nor duke, nor knight, nor anything for me,
Save a sworn Gypsy, subject with my tribe,
Over whose deeds my will is absolute.
You chose that lot, and would have railed at me
Had I refused it you: I warned you first
What oaths you had to take——

DON SILVA.

You never warned me

That you had linked yourself with Moorish men
To take this town and fortress of Bedmár—
Slay my near kinsman, him who held my place,
Our house's heir and guardian—slay my friend,
My chosen brother—desecrate the church
Where once my mother held me in her arms,
Making the holy chrism holier
With tears of joy that fell upon my brow!
You never warned——

ZARCA.

I warned you of your oath.
You shrank not, were resolved, were sure your place
Would never miss you, and you had your will.
I am no priest, and keep no consciences:
I keep my own place and my own command.

DON SILVA.

I said my place would never miss me—yes!
A thousand Spaniards died on that same day
And were not missed; their garments clothed the backs
That else were bare——

ZARCA.

But you were just the one
Above the thousand, had you known the die
That fate was throwing then.

DON SILVA.

You knew it—you!
With fiendish knowledge, smiling at the end.
You knew what snares had made my flying steps
Murderous; you let me lock my soul with oaths
Which your acts made a hellish sacrament.
I say, you knew this as a fiend would know it,
And let me damn myself.

ZARCA.

The deed was done
Before you took your oath, or reached our camp,—
Done when you slipped in secret from the post
'Twas yours to keep, and not to meditate
If others might not fill it. For your oath,

What man is he who brandishes a sword
In darkness, kills his friends, and rages then
Against the night that kept him ignorant?
Should I, for one unstable Spaniard, quit
My steadfast ends as father and as chief;
Renounce my daughter and my people's hope,
Lest a deserter should be made ashamed?

DON SILVA.

Your daughter—O great God! I vent but madness.
The past will never change. I come to stem
Harm that may yet be hindered. Chief—this stake—
Tell me who is to die! Are you not bound
Yourself to him you took in fellowship?
The town is yours; let me but save the blood
That still is warm in men who were my——

ZARCA.

Peace!
They bring the prisoner.

[Zarca waved his arm
With head averse, in peremptory sign
That 'twixt them now there should be space and silence.
Most eyes had turned to where the prisoner
Advanced among his guards; and Silva too
Turned eagerly, all other striving quelled
By striving with the dread lest he should see
His thought outside him. And he saw it there.
The prisoner was Father Isidor:
The man whom once he fiercely had accused
As author of his misdeeds—whose designs
Had forced him into fatal secrecy.
The imperious and inexorable Will
Was yoked, and he who had been pitiless
To Silva's love, was led to pitiless death.
O hateful victory of blind wishes—prayers
Which hell had overheard and swift fulfilled!
The triumph was a torture, turning all
The strength of passion into strength of pain.
Remorse was born within him, that dire birth
Which robs all else of nurture—cancerous,
Forcing each pulse to feed its anguish, turning
All sweetest residues of healthy life

To fibrous clutches of slow misery.
Silva had but rebelled—he was not free;
And all the subtle cords that bound his soul
Were tightened by the strain of one rash leap
Made in defiance. He accused no more,
But dumbly shrank before accusing throngs
Of thoughts, the impetuous recurrent rush
Of all his past-created, unchanged self.
The Father came bareheaded, frocked, a rope
Around his neck,—but clad with majesty,
The strength of resolute undivided souls
Who, owning law, obey it. In his hand
He bore a crucifix, and praying, gazed
Solely on that white image. But his guards
Parted in front, and paused as they approached
The center where the stake was. Isidor
Lifted his eyes to look around him—calm,
Prepared to speak last words of willingness
To meet his death—last words of faith unchanged,
That, working for Christ's kingdom, he had wrought
Righteously. But his glance met Silva's eyes
And drew him. Even images of stone
Look living with reproach on him who maims,
Profanes, defiles them. Silva penitent
Moved forward, would have knelt before the man
Who still was one with all the sacred things
That came back on him in their sacredness,
Kindred, and oaths, and awe, and mystery.
But at the sight, the Father thrust the cross
With deprecating act before him, and his face
Pale-quivering, flashed out horror like white light
Flashed from the angel's sword that dooming drave
The sinner to the wilderness. He spoke.]

FATHER ISIDOR.

Back from me, traitorous and accursed man!
Defile not me, who grasp the holiest,
With touch or breath! Thou foulest murderer!
Fouler than Cain who struck his brother down
In jealous rage, thou for thy base delight
Hast oped the gate for wolves to come and tear
Uncounted brethren, weak and strong alike,
The helpless priest, the warrior all unarmed
Against a faithless leader: on thy head
Will rest the sacrilege, on thy soul the blood.

These blind barbarians, misbelievers, Moors,
Are but as Pilate and his soldiery;
Thou, Judas, weighted with that heaviest crime
Which deepens hell! I warned you of this end.
A traitorous leader, false to God and man,
A knight apostate, you shall soon behold
Above your people's blood the light of flames
Kindled by you to burn me—burn the flesh
Twin with your father's. Oh, most wretched man!
Whose memory shall be of broken oaths—
Broken for lust—I turn away mine eyes
Forever from you. See, the stake is ready
And I am ready too.

DON SILVA.

It shall not be!

(*Raising his sword, he rushes in front of the guards who are advancing, and impedes them.*)

If you are human, chief, hear my demand!
Stretch not my soul upon the endless rack
Of this man's torture!

ZARCA.

Stand aside, my lord!
Put up your sword. You vowed obedience
To me, your chief. It was your latest vow.

DON SILVA.

No! hew me from the spot, or fasten me
Amid the faggots, too, if he must burn.

ZARCA.

What should befall that persecuting monk
Was fixed before you came; no cruelty,
No nicely measured torture, weight for weight
Of injury, no luscious-toothed revenge
That justifies the injurer by its joy;
I seek but rescue and security
For harmless men, and such security
Means death to vipers and inquisitors.
These faggots shall but innocently blaze
In sign of gladness, when this man is dead,

That one more torturer has left the earth.
'Tis not for infidels to burn live men
And ape the rules of Christian piety.
This hard oppressor shall not die by fire;
He mounts the gibbet, dies a speedy death,
That, like a transfixed dragon, he may cease
To vex mankind. Quick, guards, and clear the path!

[As well-trained hounds that hold their fleetness tense
In watchful, loving fixity of dark eyes,
And move with movement of their master's will,
The Gypsies with a wavelike swiftness met
Around the Father, and in wheeling course
Passed beyond Silva to the gibbet's foot,
Behind their chieftain. Sudden left alone
With weapon bare, the multitude aloof,
Silva was mazed in doubtful consciousness,
As one who slumbering in the day awakes
From striving into freedom, and yet feels
His sense half captive to intangible things;
Then with a flush of new decision sheathed
His futile naked weapon, and strode quick
To Zarca, speaking with a voice new-toned,
The struggling soul's hoarse suffocated cry
Beneath the grappling anguish of despair.]

DON SILVA.

You, Zíncalo, devil, blackest infidel!
You cannot hate that man as you hate me!
Finish your torture—take me—lift me up
And let the crowd spit at me—every Moor
Shoot reeds at me, and kill me with slow death
Beneath the midday fervor of the sun—
Or crucify me with a thieving hound—
Slake your hate so, and I will thank it: spare me
Only this man!

ZARCA.

Madman, I hate you not.
But if I did, my hate were poorly served
By my device, if I should strive to mix
A bitterer misery for you than to taste
With leisure of a soul in unharmed limbs
The flavor of your folly. For my course,

It has a goal, and takes no truant path
Because of you. I am your chief: to me
You're naught more than a Zíncalo in revolt.

DON SILVA.

No, I'm no Zíncalo! I here disown
The name I took in madness. Here I tear
This badge away. I am a Catholic knight,
A Spaniard who will die a Spaniard's death!

[Hark! while he casts the badge upon the ground
And tramples on it, Silva hears a shout:
Was it a shout that threatened him? He looked
From out the dizzying flames of his own rage
In hope of adversaries—and he saw above
The form of Father Isidor upswung
Convulsed with martyr throes; and knew the shout
For wonted exultation of the crowd
When malefactors die—or saints, or heroes.
And now to him that white-frocked murdered form
Which hanging judged him as its murderer,
Turned to a symbol of his guilt, and stirred
Tremors till then unwaked. With sudden snatch
At something hidden in his breast, he strode
Right upon Zarca: at the instant, down
Fell the great chief, and Silva, staggering back,
Heard not the Gypsies' shriek, felt not the fangs
Of their fierce grasp—heard, felt but Zarca's words
Which seemed his soul outleaping in a cry
And urging men to run like rival waves
Whose rivalry is but obedience.]

ZARCA (*as he falls*).

My daughter! call her! Call my daughter!

NADAR (*supporting* ZARCA *and crying to the Gypsies who have clutched* SILVA).

Stay!
Tear not the Spaniard, tie him to the stake:
Hear what the Chief shall bid us—there is time!

[Swiftly they tied him, pleasing vengeance so
With promise that would leave them free to watch

Their stricken good, their Chief stretched helplessly
Pillowed upon the strength of loving limbs.
He heaved low groans, but would not spend his breath
In useless words: he waited till *she* came,
Keeping his life within the citadel
Of one great hope. And now around him closed
(But in wide circle, checked by loving fear)
His people all, holding their wails suppressed
Lest death believed-in should be over-bold:
All life hung on their Chief—he would not die;
His image gone, there were no wholeness left
To make a world of for the Zíncali's thought.
Eager they stood, but hushed; the outer crowd
Spoke only in low murmurs, and some climbed
And clung with legs and arms on perilous coigns,
Striving to see where that colossal life
Lay panting—lay a Titan struggling still
To hold and give the precious hidden fire
Before the stronger grappled him. Above
The young bright morning cast athwart white walls
Her shadows blue, and with their clear-cut line,
Mildly relentless as the dial-hand's,
Measured the shrinking future of an hour
Which held a shrinking hope. And all the while
The silent beat of time in each man's soul
Made aching pulses.

But the cry, "She comes!"
Parted the crowd like waters: and she came.
Swiftly as once before, inspired with joy,
She flashed across the space and made new light,
Glowing upon the glow of evening,
So swiftly now she came, inspired with woe,
Strong with the strength of all her father's pain,
Thrilling her as with fire of rage divine
And battling energy. She knew—saw all:
The stake with Silva bound—her father pierced—
To this she had been born: a second time
Her father called her to the task of life.

She knelt beside him. Then he raised himself,
And on her face there flashed from his the light
As of a star that waned, but flames anew
In mighty dissolution: 'twas the flame
Of a surviving trust, in agony.

He spoke the parting prayer that was command,
Must sway her will, and reign invisibly.]

ZARCA.

My daughter, you have promised—you will live
To save our people. In my garments here
I carry written pledges from the Moor:
He will keep faith in Spain and Africa.
Your weakness may be stronger than my strength,
Winning more love.——I cannot tell the end.——
I held my people's good within my breast.
Behold, now I deliver it to you.
See, it still breathes unstrangled—if it dies,
Let not your failing will be murderer.——
Rise, tell our people now I wait in pain——
I cannot die until I hear them say
They will obey you.

[Meek, she pressed her lips
With slow solemnity upon his brow,
Sealing her pledges. Firmly then she rose,
And met her people's eyes with kindred gaze,
Dark-flashing, fired by effort strenuous
Trampling on pain.]

FEDALMA.

Ye Zíncali, all who hear!
Your Chief is dying: I, his daughter, live
To do his dying will. He asks you now
To promise me obedience as your Queen,
That we may seek the land he won for us,
And live the better life for which he toiled.
Speak now, and fill my father's dying ear
With promise that you will obey him dead,
Obeying me his child.

[Straightway arose
A shout of promise, sharpening into cries
That seemed to plead despairingly with death.]

THE ZÍNCALI.

We will obey! Our Chief shall never die!
We will obey him—will obey our Queen!

[The shout unanimous, the concurrent rush
Of many voices, choiring, shook the air
With multitudinous wave: now rose, now fell,
Then rose again, the echoes following slow,
As if the scattered brethren of the tribe
Had caught afar and joined the ready vow.
Then some could hold no longer, but must rush
To kiss his dying feet, and some to kiss
The hem of their Queen's garment. But she raised
Her hand to hush them. "Hark! your Chief may speak
Another wish." Quickly she kneeled again,
While they upon the ground kept motionless,
With head outstretched. They heard his words; for now,
Grasping at Nadar's arm, he spoke more loud,
As one who, having fought and conquered, hurls
His strength away with hurling off his shield.]

ZARCA.

Let loose the Spaniard! give him back his sword;
He cannot move to any vengeance more—
His soul is locked 'twixt two opposing crimes.
I charge you let him go unharmed and free
Now through your midst.——

[With that he sank again—
His breast heaved strongly tow'rd sharp sudden falls,
And all his life seemed needed for each breath:
Yet once he spoke.]

My daughter, lay your arm
Beneath my head——so——bend and breathe on me.
I cannot see you more——the night is come.
Be strong——remember——I can only——die.

[His voice went into silence, but his breast
Heaved long and moaned: its broad strength kept a life
That heard naught, saw naught, save what once had been,
And what might be in days and realms afar—
Which now in pale procession faded on
Toward the thick darkness. And she bent above
In sacramental watch to see great Death,
Companion of her future, who would wear
Forever in her eyes her father's form.

And yet she knew that hurrying feet had gone
To do the Chief's behest, and in her soul
He who was once its lord was being jarred
With loosening of cords, that would not loose
The tightening torture of his anguish. This—
Oh, she knew it!—knew it as martyrs knew
The prongs that tore their flesh, while yet their tongues
Refused the ease of lies. In moments high
Space widens in the soul. And so she knelt,
Clinging with piety and awed resolve
Beside this altar of her father's life,
Seeing long travel under solemn suns
Stretching beyond it; never turned her eyes,
Yet felt that Silva passed; beheld his face
Pale, vivid, all alone, imploring her
Across black waters fathomless.
And he passed.
The Gypsies made wide pathway, shrank aloof
As those who fear to touch the thing they hate,
Lest hate triumphant, mastering all the limbs,
Should tear, bite, crush, in spite of hindering will.
Slowly he walked, reluctant to be safe
And bear dishonored life which none assailed;
Walked hesitatingly, all his frame instinct
With high-born spirit, never used to dread
Or crouch for smiles, yet stung, yet quivering
With helpless strength, and in his soul convulsed
By visions where pale horror held a lamp
Over wide-reaching crime. Silence hung round:
It seemed the Plaça hushed itself to hear
His footsteps and the Chief's deep-dying breath.
Eyes quickened in the stillness, and the light
Seemed one clear gaze upon his misery.
And yet he could not pass her without pause:
One instant he must pause and look at her;
But with that glance at her averted head,
New-urged by pain he turned away and went,
Carrying forever with him what he fled—
Her murdered love—her love, a dear wronged ghost,
Facing him, beauteous, 'mid the throngs of hell.

Oh fallen and forsaken! were no hearts
Amid that crowd, mindful of what had been?—
Hearts such as wait on beggared royalty,
Or silent watch by sinners who despair?

Silva had vanished. That dismissed revenge
Made larger room for sorrow in fierce hearts;
And sorrow filled them. For the Chief was dead.
The mighty breast subsided slow to calm,
Slow from the face the ethereal spirit waned,
As wanes the parting glory from the heights,
And leaves them in their pallid majesty.
Fedalma kissed the marble lips, and said,
"He breathes no more." And then a long loud wail,
Poured out upon the morning, made her light
Ghastly as smiles on some fair maniac's face
Smiling unconscious o'er her bridegroom's corse.
The wailing men in eager press closed round,
And made a shadowing pall beneath the sun.
They lifted reverent the prostrate strength,
Sceptred anew by death. Fedalma walked
Tearless, erect, following the dead—her cries
Deep smothering in her breast, as one who guides
Her children through the wilds, and sees and knows
Of danger more than they, and feels more pangs,
Yet shrinks not, groans not, bearing in her heart
Their ignorant misery and their trust in her.

BOOK V.

THE eastward rocks of Almeria's bay
Answer long farewells of the traveling sun
With softest glow as from an inward pulse
Changing and flushing: all the Moorish ships
Seem conscious too, and shoot out sudden shadows;
Their black hulls snatch a glory, and their sails
Show variegated radiance, gently stirred
Like broad wings poised. Two galleys moored apart
Show decks as busy as a home of ants
Storing new forage; from their sides the boats,
Slowly pushed off, anon with flashing oar
Make transit to the quay's smooth-quarried edge,
Where thronging Gypsies are in haste to lade
Each as it comes with grandames, babes and wives,
Or with dust-tinted goods, the company
Of wandering years. Naught seems to lie unmoved,

For 'mid the throng the lights and shadows play,
And make all surface eager, while the boats
Sway restless as a horse that heard the shouts
And surging hum incessant. Naked limbs
With beauteous ease bend, lift, and throw, or raise
High signaling hands. The black-haired mother steps
Athwart the boat's edge, and with opened arms,
A wandering Isis outcast from the gods,
Leans toward her lifted little one. The boat
Full-laden cuts the waves, and dirge-like cries
Rise and then fall within it as it moves
From high to lower and from bright to dark.
Hither and thither, grave white-turbaned Moors
Move helpfully, and some bring welcome gifts,
Bright stuffs and cutlery, and bags of seed
To make new waving crops in Africa.
Others aloof with folded arms slow-eyed
Survey man's labor, saying "God is great";
Or seek with question deep the Gypsies' root,
And whether their false faith, being small, will prove
Less damning than the copious false creeds
Of Jews and Christians: Moslem subtlety
Found balanced reasons, warranting suspense
As to whose hell was deepest—'twas enough
That there was room for all. Thus the sedate.
The younger heads were busy with the tale
Of that great Chief whose exploits helped the Moor.
And, talking still, they shouldered past their friends
Following some lure which held their distant gaze
To eastward of the quay, where yet remained
A low black tent close guarded all around
By well-armed Gypsies. Fronting it above,
Raised by stone steps that sought a jutting strand,
Fedalma stood and marked with anxious watch
Each laden boat the remnant lessening
Of cargo on the shore, or traced the course
Of Nadar to an fro in hard command
Of noisy tumult; imaging oft anew
How much of labor still deferred the hour
When they must lift the boat and bear away
Her father's coffin, and her feet must quit
This shore forever. Motionless she stood,
Black-crowned with wreaths of many-shadowed hair;
Black-robed, but bearing wide upon her breast
Her father's golden necklace and his badge.

Her limbs were motionless, but in her eyes
And in her breathing lip's soft tremulous curve
Was intense motion as of prisoned fire
Escaping subtly in outleaping thought.

She watches anxiously, and yet she dreams:
The busy moments now expand, now shrink
To narrowing swarms within the refluent space
Of changeful consciousness. For in her thought
Already she has left the fading shore,
Sails with her people, seeks an unknown land,
And bears the burning length of weary days
That parching fall upon her father's hope,
Which she must plant and see it wither only—
Wither and die. She saw the end begun.
The Gypsy hearts were not unfaithful: she
Was centre to the savage loyalty
Which vowed obedience to Zarca dead.
But soon their natures missed the constant stress
Of his command, that, while it fired, restrained
By urgency supreme, and left no play
To fickle impulse scattering desire.
They loved their Queen, trusted in Zarca's child,
Would bear her o'er the desert on their arms
And think the weight a gladsome victory;
But that great force which knit them into one,
The invisible passion of her father's soul,
That wrought them visibly into his will,
And would have bound their lives with permanence,
Was gone. Already Hassan and two bands,
Drawn by fresh baits of gain, had newly sold
Their service to the Moors, despite her call,
Known as the echo of her father's will,
To all the tribe, that they should pass with her
Straightway to Telemsán. They were not moved
By worse rebellion than the wilful wish
To fashion their own service; they still meant
To come when it should suit them. But she said,
This is the cloud no bigger than a hand,
Sure-threatening. In a little while, the tribe
That was to be the ensign of the race,
And draw it into conscious union,
Itself would break in small and scattered bands
That, living on scant prey, would still disperse
And propagate forgetfulness. Brief years,

And that great purpose fed with vital fire
That might have glowed for half a century,
Subduing, quickening, shaping, like a sun—
Would be a faint tradition, flickering low
In dying memories, fringing with dim light
The nearer dark.
Far, far the future stretched
Beyond that busy present on the quay,
Far her straight path beyond it. Yet she watched
To mark the growing hour, and yet in dream
Alternate she beheld another track,
And felt herself unseen pursuing it
Close to a wanderer, who with haggard gaze
Looked out on loneliness. The backward years—
Oh, she would not forget them—would not drink
Of waters that brought rest, while he far off
Remembered. "Father, I renounced the joy;
You must forgive the sorrow."
So she stood,
Her struggling life compressed into that hour,
Yearning, resolving, conquering; though she seemed
Still as a tutelary image sent
To guard her people and to be the strength
Of some rock-citadel.
Below her sat
Slim mischievous Hinda, happy, red-bedecked
With rows of berries, grinning, nodding oft,
And shaking high her small dark arm and hand
Responsive to the black-named Ismaël,
Who held aloft his spoil, and clad in skins
Seemed the Boy-prophet of the wilderness
Escaped from tasks prophetic. But anon
Hinda would backward turn upon her knees,
And like a pretty loving hound would bend
To fondle her Queen's feet, then lift her head
Hoping to feel the gently pressing palm
Which touched the deeper sense Fedalma knew—
From out the black robe stretched her speaking hand
And shared the girl's content.
So the dire hours
Burdened with destiny—the death of hopes
Darkening long generations, or the birth
Of thoughts undying—such hours sweep along
In their aërial ocean measureless
Myriads of little joys, that ripen sweet

And soothe the sorrowful spirit of the world,
Groaning and travailing with the painful birth
Of slow redemption.
But emerging now
From eastward fringing lines of idling men
Quick Juan lightly sought the upward steps
Behind Fedalma, and two paces off,
With head uncovered, said in gentle tones,
"Lady Fedalma!"—(Juan's password now
Used by no other), and Fedalma turned,
Knowing who sought her. He advanced a step,
And meeting straight her large calm questioning gaze,
Warned her of some grave purport by a face
That told of trouble. Lower still he spoke.

JUAN.

Look from me, lady, toward a moving form
That quits the crowd and seeks the lonelier strand—
A tall and gray-clad pilgrim.——

[Solemnly
His low tones fell on her, as if she passed
Into religious dimness among tombs,
And trod on names in everlasting rest.
Lingeringly she looked, and then with voice
Deep and yet soft, like notes from some long chord
Responsive to thrilled air, said—]

FEDALMA.

It is he!

[Juan kept silence for a little space,
With reverent caution, lest his lighter grief
Might seem a wanton touch upon her pain.
But time was urging him with visible flight,
Changing the shadows: he must utter all.]

JUAN.

That man was young when last I pressed his hand—
In that dread moment when he left Bedmár.
He has aged since, the week has made him gray.
And yet I knew him—knew the white-streaked hair
Before I saw his face, as I should know
The tear-dimmed writing of a friend. See now—
Does he not linger—pause?——perhaps expect——

[Juan pled timidly: Fedalma's eyes
Flashed; and through all her frame there ran the shock
Of some sharp-wounding joy, like his who hastes
And dreads to come too late, and comes in time
To press a loved hand dying. She was mute
And made no gesture: all her being paused
In resolution, as some leonine wave
That makes a moment's silence ere it leaps.]

JUAN.

He came from Carthagena, in a boat
Too slight for safety; yon small two-oared boat
Below the rock; the fisher-boy within
Awaits his signal. But the pilgrim waits.——

FEDALMA.

Yes, I will go!—Father, I owe him this,
For loving me made all his misery.
And we will look once more—will say farewell
As in a solemn rite to strengthen us
For our eternal parting. Juan, stay
Here in my place, to warn me, were there need.
And Hinda, follow me!

[All men who watched
Lost her regretfully, then drew content
From thought that she must quickly come again,
And filled the time with striving to be near.

She, down the steps, along the sandy brink
To where he stood, walked firm; with quickened step
The moment when each felt the other saw.
He moved at sight of her: their glances met;
It seemed they could no more remain aloof
Than nearing waters hurrying into one.
Yet their steps slackened and they paused apart,
Pressed backward by the force of memories
Which reigned supreme as death above desire.
Two paces off they stood and silently
Looked at each other. Was it well to speak?
Could speech be clearer, stronger, tell them more
Than that long gaze of their renouncing love?
They passed from silence hardly knowing how;
It seemed they heard each other's thought before.]

DON SILVA.

I go to be absolved, to have my life
Washed into fitness for an offering
To injured Spain. But I have naught to give
For that last injury to her I loved
Better than I loved Spain. I am accurst
Above all sinners, being made the curse
Of her I sinned for. Pardon? Penitence?
When they have done their utmost, still beyond
Out of their reach stands Injury unchanged
And changeless. I should see it still in heaven—
Out of my reach, forever in my sight:
Wearing your grief, 'twould hide the smiling seraphs.
I bring no puling prayer, Fedalma—ask
No balm of pardon that may soothe my soul
For others' bleeding wounds: I am not come
To say, "Forgive me": you must not forgive,
For you must see me ever as I am—
Your father's——

FEDALMA.

Speak it not! Calamity
Comes like a deluge and o'erflows our crimes,
Till sin is hidden in woe. You—I—we two,
Grasping we knew not what, that seemed delight,
Opened the sluices of that deep.

DON SILVA.

We two?—
Fedalma, you were blameless, helpless.

FEDALMA.

No!
It shall not be that you did aught alone.
For when we loved I willed to reign in you,
And I was jealous even of the day
If it could gladden you apart from me.
And so, it must be that I shared each deed
Our love was root of.

DON SILVA.

Dear! you share the woe—
Nay, the worst dart of vengeance fell on you.

FEDALMA.

Vengeance! She does but sweep us with her skirts—
She takes large space, and lies a baleful light
Revolving with long years—sees children's children,
Blights them in their prime—Oh, if two lovers leaned
To breathe one air and spread a pestilence,
They would but lie two livid victims dead
Amid the city of the dying. We
With our poor petty lives have strangled one
That ages watch for vainly.

DON SILVA.

Deep despair
Fills all your tones as with slow agony.
Speak words that narrow anguish to some shape:
Tell me what dread is close before you?

FEDALMA.

None.
No dread, but clear assurance of the end.
My father held within his mighty frame
A people's life: great futures died with him
Never to rise, until the time shall ripe
Some other hero with the will to save
The outcast Zíncali.

DON SILVA.

And yet their shout—
I heard it—sounded as the plenteous rush
Of full-fed sources, shaking their wild souls
With power that promised sway.

FEDALMA.

Ah, yes, that shout
Came from full hearts: they meant obedience.
But they are orphaned: their poor childish feet
Are vagabond in spite of love, and stray
Forgetful after little lures. For me—
I am but as the funeral urn that bears
The ashes of a leader.

DON SILVA.

O great God!
What am I but a miserable brand

Lit by mysterious wrath? I lie cast down
A blackened branch upon the desolate ground
Where once I kindled ruin. I shall drink
No cup of purest water but will taste
Bitter with thy lone hopelessness, Fedalma.

FEDALMA.

Nay, Silva, think of me as one who sees
A light serene and strong on one sole path
Which she will tread till death——
He trusted me, and I will keep his trust:
My life shall be its temple. I will plant
His sacred hope within the sanctuary
And die its priestess—though I die alone,
A hoary woman on the altar-step,
Cold 'mid cold ashes. That is my chief good.
The deepest hunger of a faithful heart
Is faithfulness. Wish me naught else. And you—
You too will live——

DON SILVA.

I go to Rome, to seek
The right to use my knightly sword again;
The right to fill my place and live or die
So that all Spaniards shall not curse my name.
I sat one hour upon the barren rock
And longed to kill myself; but then I said,
I will not leave my name in infamy,
I will not be perpetual rottenness
Upon the Spaniard's air. If I must sink
At last to hell, I will not take my stand
Among the coward crew who could not bear
The harm themselves had done, which others bore.
My young life yet may fill some fatal breach,
And I will take no pardon, not my own,
Not God's—no pardon idly on my knees:
But it shall come to me upon my feet
And in the thick of action, and each deed
That carried shame and wrong shall be the sting
That drives me higher up the steep of honor
In deeds of duteous service to that Spain
Who nourished me on her expectant breast,
The heir of highest gifts. I will not fling
My earthly being down for carrion

To fill the air with loathing: I will be
The living prey of some fierce noble death
That leaps upon me while I move. Aloud
I said, "I will redeem my name," and then—
I know not if aloud: I felt the words
Drinking up all my senses—"She still lives.
I would not quit the dear familiar earth
Where both of us behold the self-same sun,
Where there can be no strangeness 'twixt our thoughts
So deep as their communion." Resolute
I rose and walked.—Fedalma, think of me
As one who will regain the only life
Where he is other than apostate—one
Who seeks but to renew and keep the vows
Of Spanish knight and noble. But the breach
Outside those vows—the fatal second breach—
Lies a dark gulf where I have naught to cast,
Not even expiation—poor pretense,
Which changes naught but what survives the past,
And raises not the dead. That deep dark gulf
Divides us.

FEDALMA.

Yes, forever. We must walk
Apart unto the end. Our marriage rite
Is our resolve that we will each be true
To high allegiance, higher than our love.
Our dear young love—its breath was happiness!
But it had grown upon a larger life
Which tore its roots asunder. We rebelled—
The larger life subdued us. Yet we are wed;
For we shall carry each the pressure deep
Of the other's soul. I soon shall leave the shore.
The winds to-night will bear me far away
My lord, farewell!

He did not say "Farewell."
But neither knew that he was silent. She,
For one long moment, moved not. They knew naught
Save that they parted; for their mutual gaze
As with their soul's full speech forbade their hands
To seek each other—those oft-clasping hands
Which had a memory of their own, and went
Widowed of one dear touch forevermore.

At last she turned and with swift movement passed,
Beckoning to Hinda, who was bending low
And lingered still to wash her shells, but soon
Leaping and scampering followed, while her Queen
Mounted the steps again and took her place,
Which Juan rendered silently.
And now
The press upon the quay was thinned; the ground
Was cleared of cumbering heaps, the eager shouts
Had sunk, and left a murmur more restrained
By common purpose. All the men ashore
Were gathering into ordered companies,
And with less clamor filled the waiting boats
As if the speaking light commanded them
To quiet speed: for now the farewell glow
Was on the topmost heights, and where far ships
Were southward tending, tranquil. slow. and white
Upon the luminous meadow toward the verge.
The quay was in still shadow, and the boats
Went sombrely upon the sombre waves.
Fedalma watched again; but now her gaze
Takes in the eastward bay, where that small bark
Which held the fisher-boy floats weightier
With one more life, that rests upon the oar
Watching with her. He would not go away
Till she was gone; he would not turn his face
Away from her at parting: but the sea
Should widen slowly 'twixt their seeking eyes.

The time was coming. Nadar had approached.
Was the Queen ready? Would she follow now
Her father's body? For the largest boat
Was waiting at the quay, the last strong band
Of Zincali had ranged themselves in lines
To guard her passage and to follow her.
"Yes, I am ready"; and with action prompt
They cast aside the Gypsy's wandering tomb,
And fenced the space from curious Moors who pressed
To see Chief Zarca's coffin as it lay.
They raised it slowly, holding it aloft
On shoulders proud to bear the heavy load.
Bound on the coffin lay the chieftain's arms,
His Gypsy garments and his coat of mail.
Fedalma saw the burden lifted high,
And then descending followed. All was still.

The Moors aloof could hear the struggling steps
Beneath the lowered burden at the boat—
The struggling calls subdued, till safe released
It lay within, the space around it filled
By black-haired Gypsies. Then Fedalma stepped
From off the shore and saw it flee away—
The land that bred her helping the resolve
Which exiled her forever.
It was night
Before the ships weighed anchor and gave sail:
Fresh Night emergent in her clearness, lit
By the large crescent moon, with Hesperus,
And those great stars that lead the eager host.
Fedalma stood and watched the little bark
Lying jet-black upon moon-whitened waves.
Silva was standing too. He too divined
A steadfast form that held him with its thought,
And eyes that sought him vanishing: he saw
The waters widen slowly, till at last
Straining he gazed, and knew not if he gazed
On aught but blackness overhung by stars.

THE END.

NOTES.

Page 320. *Cactus.*

The Indian fig (*Opuntia*) like the other *Cactaceæ*, is believed to have been introduced into Europe from South America; but every one who has been in the south of Spain will understand why the anachronism has been chosen.

Page 402. *Marranos.*

The name given by the Spanish Jews to the multitudes of their race converted to Christianity at the end of the fourteenth century and beginning of the fifteenth. The lofty derivation from *Maran-atha*, the Lord cometh, seems hardly called for, seeing that *marrano* is Spanish for *pig*. The "old Christians" learned to use the word as a term of contempt for the "new Christians," or converted Jews and their descendants; but not too monotonously, for they often interchanged it with the fine old crusted opprobrium of the name *Jew*. Still, many Marranos held the highest secular and ecclesiastical prizes in Spain, and were respected accordingly.

Page 417. *Celestial Baron.*

The Spaniards conceived their patron Santiago (St. James), the great captain of their armies, as a knight and baron; to them, the incongruity would have lain in conceiving him simply as a Galilean fisherman. And their legend was adopted with respect by devout mediæval minds generally. Dante, in an elevated passage of the *Paradiso*—the memorable opening of *Canto* XXV,—chooses to introduce the Apostle James as *il barone*.

> "Indi si mosse un lume verso noi
> Di quella schiera, ond 'uscì la primizia
> Che lasciò Crisso de' vicari suoi.
> E la mia Donna piena de letizia
> Mi disse: Mira, mira, ecco 'l barone,
> Per cui laggiù si visita Galizia."

Page 418. *The Seven Parts.*

Las Siete Partidas (The Seven Parts) is the title given to the code of laws compiled under Alfonso the Tenth, who reigned in the latter half of the thirteenth century—1252-1284. The passage in the text is translated from *Partida II., Ley II.* The whole preamble is worth citing in its old Spanish:—

" Como deben ser escogidos caballeros."

" Antiguamiente para facer caballeros escogien de los venadores de monte, que son homes que sufren grande laceria, et carpinteros, et ferreros, et pedreros, porque usan mucho a ferir et son fuerte de manos; et otrosi de los carniceros, por razon que usan matar las cosas vivas et esparcer la sangre dellas: et aun cataban otra cosa en escogiendolos que fuesen bien faccionadas de membros para ser recios, et fuertes et ligeros. Et esta manera de escoger usaron los antiguos muy grant tiempo; mas porque despues vieron muchas vegadas que estos atales non habiendo vergüenza olvidaban todas estas cosas sobredichas, et en logar de vincer sus enemigos vencíen: e ellos, tovieron por bien los sabidores destas cosas que catasen homes para esto que hobiesen naturalmiente en sí vergüenza. Et sobresto dixo un sabio que habie nombre VEGECIO que fabló de la órden de caballería, que la vergüenza vieda al caballero que non fuya de la batalla, et por ende ella le face ser vencedor; ca mucho tovieron que era mejor el homo flaco et sofridor, que el fuerte et ligero para foir. Et por esto sobre todas las otras cosas cataron que fuesen homes porque se guardasen de facer cosa por que podiesen caer en vergüenza: et porque estos fueron escogidos de buenos logares et algo, que quiere tanto decir en lenguage de España como bien, por eso los llamaron fijosdalgo, que muestra atanto como fijos de bien. Et en algunos otros logares los llamaron gentiles, et tomaron este nombre de gentileza que muestra atanto como nobleza de bondat, porque los gentiles fueron nobles homes et buenos, et vevieron mas ordenadamente que las otras gentes. Et esta gentileza aviene en tres maneras la una por linage, la segunda por saber, et la tercera por bondat de armas et de costumbres et de maneras. Et comoquier que estos que la ganan por su sabidoría ó por su bondat, son con derecho llamados nobles et gentiles, mayormiente lo son aquellos que la han por linage antiguamiente, et facen buena vida porque les viene de lueñe como por heredat: et por ende son mas encargados de facer bien et guardarse de yerro et de malestanza; ca non tan solamiente quando lo facen resciben daño et vergüenza ellos mismos, ma aun aquellos onde ellos vienen."